THE INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

THE TABLET

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Rising to the challenge

How Catholic charities are preparing for the crisis

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A new Joan takes the stage

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UKRAINE AND RUSSIA

THE THORNY PATH TO PEACE

The ideal outcome of the war in Ukraine is the restoration to Ukrainian control of all the territory occupied by Russia in the past decade. The harder question facing the government in Kyiv, but also every Western power that has supported it, is how far short of that ideal is it reasonable to go to secure a peace settlement? It is difficult to imagine Russia pulling out of Crimea, for instance, without a gun at its back. But such a humiliation for Vladimir Putin could only come after a long and bloody campaign and huge commitment of money and *materiel* by the principal nations of the Western alliance.

Britain and the United States in particular have a duty to help Ukraine achieve its legitimate war aims, primarily self-defence. But the uncomfortable truth for Western policy makers is that Crimea and the Russian-controlled part of the Donbas region are territories where sovereignty is disputed. This does not apply to territory gained since the Russian attack of 24 February. A realisable war aim, which the West could back unconditionally, would therefore be the restoration of the situation prior to 24 February. For a while President Volodymyr Zelenskiy seemed to accept that possible outcome. But recent Ukrainian success against Russian forces has whetted his appetite for the recapture of the whole Donbas region – including the two districts, Donetsk and Luhansk, recognised as independent states by Moscow – and of Crimea.

When armies collapse, they do so first bit by bit and then all at once. The bit by bit part seems to be in progress across a wide front, and has been greatly facilitated by Ukraine's use of advanced guided missiles supplied mainly by the US. Russia in turn has increasingly relied on indiscriminate artillery bombardments of towns it wants to capture, often after they have been emptied of civilians. Once Ukraine recaptures them the pattern is for reports of brutality and torture to emerge, and also of the cowardice of ordinary Russia infantry under fire. They do not believe in what they have been forced to do. The notion that the appearance of the Russians would prompt an uprising of the Ukrainian people against the government in Kyiv was clearly part of the Holy Rus dream world that Putin and his advisers appeared to inhabit. But the brutality of the invasion makes reconciliation between Ukraine and Russia almost impossible to envisage any time soon.

The people of Ukraine must be allowed to control their own destiny. The West should not write Kyiv a blank cheque. At some point something like the Minsk agreement, or Minsk II – granting self-government to certain areas of Donbas – will have to come into play. They failed before, due to a lack of good faith on both sides, but much blood has been spilled since then. The threat of all-out war to liberate Crimea may be enough to bring Putin to the negotiating table, the West saying to him that it can only constrain Ukraine's wider ambitions if there is a real prospect of peace in Donbas. The Russian army is disillusioned and demoralised, and Putin's own survival may depend on his response. That is the hope, but it could be a forlorn one.

FUTURE OF UK MONARCHY

ROYALTY MUST NOT REST ON ITS LAURELS

State and nation rose to the occasion. The funeral of Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II brought forth a superb performance of military drill on a spectacular scale, visually and physically. The public response to her death, long queues to view her lying-in-state and huge crowds to watch the procession go past, was of the same order of magnitude. The country seemed to be at ease with itself, rather proud for being so. And proud of her.

But herein lies a danger. The power of monarchy to maintain and strengthen the social fabric of a nation like Great Britain can be overestimated. It is easy to forget that it also has divisive influences, such as sustaining an elitist structure of power and severe inequalities of wealth distribution. It must emphasise the "best of British", not the worst. Cohesion and inequality pull in opposite directions.

Disraeli's warning that Britain had become "Two Nations" was still true a century and a half after he uttered it, despite the emergence of a vast middle class sitting between rich and poor. It was as if the two nations lived on different planets, he observed. The royal family, and not just its head, King Charles, has to ask itself which planet it wants to belong to. Across private and public sectors, workers are feeling threatened and are demanding more pay to keep up with inflation, to heat their homes and feed their children. If it is true as free marketeers claim that a rising tide lifts all boats, it is no less the case that a falling tide can leave them to founder helplessly. Meanwhile bankers' bonuses and company directors' remuneration packages are through the roof. There is no long-term future for an institution of royalty that props up inequality based on accident of birth, class and inherited wealth, nor on a form of capitalism that rewards only the few.

The great mistake of 2022 would be for the royal family to assume that the goodwill and affection that poured out for the late Queen was a transferable and indeed inheritable asset, to be automatically redirected towards the next in line. The people who expressed their admiration for the Queen always spoke of her "sense of duty", but recognition of this sense took a long time to grow. This affection protected the institution she headed from being seen as an incongruous anomaly.

What can it do to democratise? In the name of social justice it could, for instance, pay its own way. There is no need for the taxpayer to subsidise a family so wealthy. It could pay its taxes on income and inheritance at the same level as the rest of society. It could declare its assets, including the contents of its last wills and testaments after probate, and forgo a portion of them in lieu of unpaid tax in the past. It could stop sending its children to privileged and elite schools and colleges. And in the process it would become more like the British people it purports to represent, thereby renewing their loyal affection and securing its own future.

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PHOTO: CNS, PAUL HARING



25 Metropolitan Anthony, Chief Rabbi David Baruch Lau and Pope Francis in Kazakhstan

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In spite of the government's expected mini-budget this week, Catholic charities are preparing for what will be a difficult winter for many families and communities. Some hope that the crisis will prompt a long overdue step change in the way the Church responds to domestic poverty and deprivation / **By ABIGAIL FRYMANN ROUCH**

Rising to the challenge

PHOTO: CARITAS, MINET MASHO



Bishop Paul McAleenan, an auxiliary of Westminster, at a local pensioners' lunch club

IT SOUNDED like a treat: the children chatted excitedly about a family movie night they had enjoyed at the end of the school holidays, snuggled up under their fleecy blankets by candlelight watching Mum's laptop and eating a picnic of jam butties and fruit juice. But when a family support worker at Caritas Shrewsbury asked their mother about it, she explained she had run out of money for the electricity meter, and had been unable to cook a meal or heat water for the shower. Food in their aged freezer had defrosted too. She was counting the days until the next pay cheque, and had wanted to protect her children from the dilemmas she faced. "Bless Mum for her ingenuity and care," noted the support worker, adding: "This is the tip of the iceberg. There will be many more such cases."

Temperatures have not yet dipped into autumnal or wintry lows, yet charities, including Catholic agencies with their links to communities through parishes and schools, are already reporting vastly increased requests for help with food and fuel costs as a complex mix of factors is pushing prices up. Earlier this month, when Cardinal Vincent Nichols issued a message congratulating Liz Truss on becoming Prime Minister, he devoted virtually every line to the cost-of-living crisis, urging her to reconsider "the level of welfare benefits and the impact of the two-child cap on Universal Credit payments, among other possible actions".

Truss' announcement three days later that energy bills would be capped at roughly £2,500 a year for an average household brought relief, but many people still face an impossible leap in prices. Professor Donald Hirsch of Loughborough University, from whom former Prime Minister Gordon Brown commissioned research into the impact of rising costs on the poorest households, told me this week that the cap "still leaves families with far less income than last year, relative to what they need to spend", a shortfall he put at £1,400 over 12 months. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has warned that without additional support from the government, "millions of families still face a winter going without essentials like food or hygiene, or [being forced to] borrow money at increasing interest rates".

The directors of Catholic charities are well aware of these dire predictions. They are preparing to meet the challenge as much as their resources will allow: expanding their operations, appealing for extra funds, volunteers and partnerships; and investing more in advocacy to highlight the causes of the poverty they are seeing.

The St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP), the largest Catholic charity focused on domestic poverty, is launching a £500,000 cost-of-living support fund using "money from our reserves, because we think this is an unprecedented period", explains CEO Elizabeth Palmer. SVP members will be able to apply for grants on behalf of the people they help. The charity has begun opening "food pantries", which offer users more choice than food banks and are more akin to subsidised shopping. Boosted by a £10,000 gift to start new local groups – or "conferences" – the SVP will be appealing for people to join its 8,500 members and 700 volunteers across England and Wales.

The SVP will also launch a campaign to encourage giving to the new fund and will press the government to increase benefits and deliver on its levelling-up agenda. In the last 18 months, it has begun opening locally tailored support centres in every diocese. In Cardiff, Palmer says, the outgoing Archbishop George Stack allowed the SVP to refurbish a disused church as a support centre, a move of which his successor Mark O'Toole has been "amazingly supportive".

In addition, local conferences are tailoring their responses to meet local needs. Winston Waller, an SVP member in Whitstable in Kent for 49 years, says his conference will be offering its food-bank users ideas for low-cost recipes and advice on how to reduce energy consumption when it delivers its food parcels. Extra central funds would be handy. "Until two years ago, our food bank pretty well survived on donations from the town, from the parish. Nowadays we're spending about £900 to £1,000 a month because the quantity of food has gone down, because people haven't got the spare. And the demand has skyrocketed," he said.

FOR CARITAS Westminster, the turbulence of the last two years has provided something of a training ground. Assistant director Meriel Woodward lists initiatives pioneered during the pandemic that are being relaunched or scaled up for the cost-of-living crisis, such as supplying parishes with supermarket vouchers to distribute and offering training in supporting people to be more financially resilient, including helping them find what the charity calls "dignified work". In November it will host a Cost of Living Conference on practical ways to help people who are struggling, and a course, Firm Foundations, will be offered to encourage parishes to launch initiatives such as credit unions.

Caritas Westminster will also be encouraging parishes to become "warm hubs" and host community dining to alleviate food and fuel poverty and isolation. Woodward highlights a community dining project at Our Lady of Fatima parish in White City, west London, that is up and running in good time for the winter. "They did [Caritas Westminster's programme] Love in Action since Covid, and ... recruited 82 volunteers to do different projects within the parish," she said.

But there is real concern at the hardship facing some families over the coming months and beyond. Asked what Caritas Shrewsbury, which covers Shropshire, Cheshire, Wirral and the south of Greater Manchester, is doing

to prepare for the cost of living crisis, CEO Ben Gilchrist told me it is already responding to "an existing cost-of-living crisis". He added: "The pressure now is increased, and on many more [families] ... and we're hugely concerned." At the extreme, he said, children were arriving at school hungry and "not clean", in "clothes that need mending, shoes that aren't really suitable". And if their mental health is being affected by the stress, children could become withdrawn or aggressive.

THE CHARITY is scaling up its community projects, which include a food bank, a cash grant scheme and a shopping voucher scheme, and is intensifying its family support work, aware that economic poverty and poor family relationships are often closely linked. It is applying for grants and will be appealing for more volunteers and for funds through its Caritas at Christmas appeal.

The head of the neighbouring Caritas, in Salford Diocese, where in some local authority areas one in three children lives in poverty, also voices concern. The charity will be launching its Advent campaign early this year. It has already found extra donors to boost its emergency fund – the Caritas Bishop's Fund set up by Bishop John Arnold – and it will be launching "multiple different fund-raising campaigns". Director Patrick O'Dowd says it needs this extra funding to enable it to expand its support for vulnerable households, which includes providing emergency food and accommodation.

Caritas Salford has also produced guidance on how to access help from other charities and statutory services, and is advising parishes on how to become "warm hubs" for people who cannot afford to heat their homes, or how to collaborate with other local places of worship to do so. But O'Dowd worries that all Caritas Salford's efforts to meet demand will be overwhelmed by high energy costs and inflation. Caritas Salford runs day centres and three residential homes, including two for young mothers and children, which "need to be heated and supported 24/7". At the same time, O'Dowd pointed out, inflation is reducing the value of the charity's reserves. It's not difficult to see why he is concerned.

In Gordon Brown's home town of Kirkcaldy, Fife, Canon Brian Gowans, vicar episcopal for Caritas Justice and Peace in the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh, says volunteers have in recent weeks opened a clothing bank. There are already many food banks around, which Gowans, with a hint of anger, describes as "the poor looking after the poor". Gowans is considering encouraging churches to open their halls and to supply schools with vouchers for food and clothing to be distributed discreetly. Despite the deprivation around him, he is cheered by having found an ally. One of the three churches in his parish is in a mining village where he and the local Church of Scotland minister work closely together. "Anything he's doing, if my congregation can help, we will, and anything I'm doing, if his congregation can help, they will."

CONTINUED ON **PAGE 6**

CLIFFORD **LONGLEY**

Virtue is never about itself. Virtue always points towards the common good



If there is one word which embraces all the admirable qualities the late lamented Queen possessed, it is "virtue". The classical tradition gives us four elements within this complex concept, the cardinal virtues, and Christianity has contributed three more. The Queen practised all seven: justice, prudence, temperance and fortitude; and above all, faith, hope and charity. Within the latter three, humility, mercy and compassion are also implied. And so we found in her all the desired requirements of kingship: the job specification of monarchy, as it were. Virtue, the word that sums up these requirements, is never about itself. Virtue always points towards the common good.

The British do not have a written constitution as other countries have; but there is no vacuum. Instead there is a coronation, an event which enshrines virtue at the heart of public life, the nation's very soul. It is a consequence of the longevity of the Queen that the last coronation was in 1953. But she embodied in her personality and character all the values and principles manifested in that event. Through her, it was continuously present. And it is much more than her personal assignment.

The government of the country is conducted on behalf of the Crown; ministers in the government are ministers of the Crown; judges sit in the name of the Crown, usually under the royal coat of arms on the wall behind them. Criminals are brought to trial by the Crown Prosecution Service. Police and the armed services act in her name, as do civil servants (servants of the Crown); we pay our taxes to Her Majesty's (now His Majesty's) Revenue and Customs (HMRC). And so on. So the Crown is not just one person residing at Buckingham Palace or Windsor Castle. It is everywhere. And it all derives from the coronation, the symbolic act by which the Crown, in the person of the monarch, commits itself to the common good.

There are those already at work devising the ceremonial of the next coronation, that of Charles III, not due until next year. They may tempted to drop the verbose and archaic language used in 1953, and edit out various symbolic acts of obscure pedigree of which that ceremony largely consisted. Or they may keep them, reducing the whole show to a museum piece that nobody is supposed to understand. Neither course would serve the public interest, and would harm the very concept of monarchy. It certainly has to be a more inclusive and secular event in form than the narrowly Church of England service it was then (with a walk-on part for the Moderator of the Church of Scotland). But somehow the spiritual and moral genius of the coronation service must be preserved, because the coronation defines Britain as a nation just as much as it defines the British monarchy; and just as much as the written American Constitution defines the United States. This cherished process is historically and inevitably in the hands of the Church of England – under the careful supervision of the Earl Marshal, the Duke of Norfolk, who is, as it happens, a Roman Catholic. They hold a precious treasure in their hands.

Some examples from the 1953 coronation service, taken from models that go back 800 years, make the point. As the Sword of State was passed to the monarch, the Archbishop of Canterbury solemnly uttered: "With this sword do justice, stop the growth of iniquity, protect the holy Church of God, help and defend widows and orphans, restore the things that are gone to decay, maintain the things that are restored, punish and reform what is amiss, and confirm what is in good order: that doing these things you may be glorious in all virtue ..." Those are the duties not just personally of the monarch, but of the Crown and all who operate in its name.

Thus when Queen Elizabeth swore at her coronation that she would dispense justice mercifully, she was swearing this on behalf of every one of the judges who sat in her name. Thus was mercy upheld as part of the common law. Every judge who passes sentence has to follow bench guidelines which specifically require one-third off a standard sentence if the defendant pleads guilty, which is taken to indicate confession and remorse. This is not mere convenience, and a government which tried to do away with it would be in serious trouble constitutionally. What other country has built mercy into its very fabric in this way, not just as a right or duty but as a way of being?

All this did the Queen represent; and all this must Charles do too. The signs are that he knows it; but he needs a coronation to tell us so.

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Deepening alliances between church groups working to alleviate poverty may turn out to be a positive legacy of the cost-of-living crisis. Caritas Shrewsbury is working more closely with other local charities in Greater Manchester, to share information and avoid duplication. Ben Gilchrist is hoping for "deeper partnership work between the voluntary sector and the public sector – and even the business sector", through greater collaboration in using the skills and expertise available locally.

A new cost-of-living working group of the Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN), the umbrella organisation that coordinates Catholic charitable activities in England and Wales, has been given the task of enabling its member organisations to share information and best practice, and develop a unified approach to advocacy. CSAN has also signed up to the Warm Welcome initiative, pioneered by the Good Faith Partnership, which helps places of worship to open "warm hubs".

Professor Hirsch's report, with its introduction by Gordon Brown, was signed by the heads of many faith-based organisations, including the CEO of CSAN, Raymond Friel, and the Caritas directors. Signatories have been meeting to collaborate on lobbying for poverty reduction, hosted by the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT), a justice and peace collaboration of the Baptist Union and the Methodist and United Reformed Churches. This new group is preparing to send a letter to Liz Truss, signed by CSAN's chair, Bishop Terry Drainey, calling for more help for the lowest-income households.

ANOTHER LONG-TERM positive that could emerge from the crisis is a stronger focus on advocacy and a new confidence in calling for major social change. Raymond Friel says the group backing the Hirsch report shares "a wider advocacy ambition to put us on a path to poverty-free Britain". He believes the cost-of-living crisis could run "well into next year". Friel explains that CSAN's website will include vivid stories of people suffering hardship, as well as suggestions for advocacy, such as how to raise concerns with your MP.

Elizabeth Palmer of the SVP and Meriel Woodward of Caritas Westminster also believe sharing human stories is an important part of sharpening advocacy efforts. They want their charities to get better at collecting them and communicating them, in particular to the bishops. SVP is going to start gathering stories this autumn, and Caritas, which has recently begun collecting data, is already finding it fruitful, discovering, for example, that 46 per cent of recipients of their supermarket vouchers are in work. "Armed with clear, accurate information and stories, the bishops' conference can lobby Parliament, lobby specific MPs ... The Church has so much influence and power if it's coordinated, credible and timely," said Woodward.

Caritas Salford has just appointed its first policy, advocacy and research coordinator to highlight and encourage policy change on chronic local poverty. And Fr Dominic Robinson SJ, chair of Westminster Diocese's Justice and Peace Commission, says he will be helping parishes to work with civil society to combat "the structural injustice we are witnessing". Robinson wants to challenge "those in positions of responsibility in our communities to engage in a discussion of the causes of structural injustice".

All those across the Catholic charity sector I have spoken to in recent weeks told me they need more volunteers, more money and more parish engagement if they are to see vulnerable households through the cost-of-living crisis this winter and beyond. Their hope is that this help will come forward as stories of hardship – and stories of how local churches and communities are working together in practical and well coordinated ways to respond to families and individuals in need – emerge this winter.

Elizabeth Palmer said: "It would be much better if there weren't this opportunity. But this *is* an opportunity ... for us to stand for something, for the Church to matter in the lives of people who maybe don't go to church, and for more people to take an active role."

Abigail Frymann Rouch is a freelance journalist.

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'She was a living saint'

Until the day of her funeral, mourners from around the world queued in London all day and night over several miles to pay their respects to Her Majesty / **By KATHERINE BACKLER**

PHOTO: ALAMY/ELEVENTH HOUR PHOTOGRAPHY



BELIEVE IT or not, I was in church praying when I got the news. Some sniffling behind me became the voice of one of the priests. "Katherine," he said. "The Queen's died." I offered him a hug, which he accepted. "You're young," he said, as if to explain himself. "But it was my whole life."

Precisely because I am young, with fully functioning knees and a flexible job, I decided I would go to see the coffin. I wasn't sure what "paying one's respects" entailed; the only coffins I have ever interacted with have been peopled with close relatives, whose bodies could be kissed. I identified two friends who were keen; one came on crutches. At the last moment my cousin said she would join us, which astonished me – though she lives just 10 miles from Charing Cross, she views "going into London" as a major event, has only once made the great journey alone, and certainly never at night. She "wanted to be part of it", she said.

My friends and I came down from Oxford on the 9 p.m. train and joined the queue (pictured) at 10.40 p.m. on Wednesday, just west of Southwark Bridge. I spent the first 10 minutes on the phone to my cousin who wasn't sure whether to turn left or right out of London Bridge station, and the second 10 minutes going to rescue her.

Along the way, various sub-queues peeled off the main queue, for coffees or loos. At 12.30 a.m., in the queue for the Caffè Nero loo between Blackfriars and Waterloo Bridges, I met Imelda Hodgkinson, an Irish Catholic who worked in Colchester. "The Queen was a living saint," she said. "She radiated goodness. I admired her morals, her principles. She did so much for Ireland, for the peace process. She was a unifier. A peacemaker." When I repeated this to my friend, she said that given the horrors of British rule in Ireland, her Irish Catholic boyfriend "couldn't bring himself to sign a condolence book".

The very architecture of the route bore the imprints of her reign: the queue stretched along the Queen's Walk and Jubilee Walkway, studded with silver crowns underfoot. Each Thameside institution offered its tribute. The Globe displayed reflections on monarchy from Shakespeare. The BFI showed British Pathé footage of her reign; as we passed at 1.30 a.m., the black-and-white footage had given way to colour: young women in hijabs preparing to meet the Queen on her 1961 visit to Pakistan, 14 years after Partition. The Royal Festival Hall piped out Pérotin's *Beata Viscera*, a twelfth-century hymn to Mary, mother of the King. The lights of the Hungerford and Golden Jubilee Bridges danced to the music.

We reached the fabled "zig-zags", the final stage of the queue, immediately outside the Palace of Westminster, at 4.45 a.m. Estimates for the zig-zag duration ranged from two hours to six; we discarded the latter figure for the sake of morale. My friend on crutches was holding up well (their rhythmic click and silver glint had been a comfort through the night) but my cousin, who had come in heels, could barely walk. Eventually she took them off and held herself up on my arm. She worried aloud that it wouldn't be worth all this for five minutes in Westminster Hall. Stewards picked up unopened food left atop overflowing bins by those who had not realised there were hours to go before security checks and redistributed it to queuers further along.

Though my friend with her crutches had declined many gentle invitations from stewards along the route to join the separate queue for people with a disability, they finally insisted, and we were ushered on to a series of ramps before an attendant directed us into the hall from the opposite end.

Perhaps grander and more beautiful than the coffin in its regalia were the two dark streams of mourners flowing down the steps towards it. I curtseyed awkwardly. I think I said an "Eternal Rest". I looked up at the 1,000-year ceiling and thought of David and Solomon, anointed by God to serve his people. Mostly, though, my mind was on my cousin, on her feet and her frustration, worrying whether she'd feel it had all been a horrible waste of time. I hope it was a fitting tribute to this Queen of kenosis, whose tiny frame was so loaded with the weight of symbolism – history, "Britishness", Empire, time – but professed to have no will beyond her role, that I spent those final, long-awaited moments thinking about someone else.

Katherine Backler is a fellow of All Souls College, Oxford.



Like every new sovereign, King Charles III will promise to uphold the teaching, worship, discipline and 'all such rights and privileges' of the Church of England. But might the coronation oaths be reworded for a more ecumenical and secular age? / **By TERRY TASTARD**

A faithful Protestant

BEFORE THE CORONATION ceremony any new monarch has to declare solemnly their Protestant identity. The first of these accession oaths has already taken place. At a Privy Council meeting on 10 September, King Charles III solemnly promised that he would "inviolably maintain and preserve the Settlement of the true Protestant Religion as established by the Laws made in Scotland … securing the Protestant Religion and Presbyterian Church Government." The Scots had insisted on this royal oath as a condition for the Union of 1707.

The second accession oath is usually taken at the first parliament of the reign and was originally inspired by anti-Catholic sentiment. In this accession oath King Charles will declare that he is "a faithful Protestant", and that he will uphold the Protestant succession to the throne. This oath harks back to 1689 and was intended to prevent the return of the Catholic James II and exclude his successors from the throne. It was initially a test for membership of parliament, or entry into office under the crown.

In 1701 it was extended to new monarchs. The oath had been devised with wording so anti-Catholic that no conscientious Catholic could take it. Whoever took the oath had to swear that there was no truth in transubstantiation or the Real Presence. "Invocation or adoration of the Virgin Mary … and the Sacrifice of the Mass" were said to be "superstitious and idolatrous", and the ability of the pope to absolve was denied.

The accession oath in this form was abolished with Catholic emancipation in 1829, except for the monarch, who still had to make the declaration as required. By 1901 and the death of Queen Victoria, the oath already seemed anachronistic and offensive to Catholics. It not only impugned their religion but cast doubt on their loyalty. Edward VII took the oath but showed his displeasure by saying it in a low monotone.

In 1910 George V stood firm and refused to take the oath as it stood. He was aware of his father's reluctance and of the offence its wording gave to Catholics, not only in Ireland but in the Empire. As early as 1901 the Canadian Parliament had expressed its displeasure about the wording of the oath. We might also wonder whether George V's stubbornness had been influenced by his first love.

AGED 18, the then Prince George had fallen in love with Julie Stonor, whose mother had been one of Queen Alexandra's women of the bedchamber. But Stonor was not only a commoner, she was also from one of England's best known recusant families, and the Settlement Act of 1701 did not allow George to marry a Catholic. Queen Alexandra told the prince: "I only wish you could marry and be happy but alas I fear that cannot be." George and Stonor went their separate ways but kept in touch until his death.

It was a propitious time to seek a change in the wording of the oath. Prime Minister Asquith's Liberal Party depended on the votes

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of Irish MPs. Asquith approached the Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson, for an alternative formula. Parliament had to resume without George V's presence, until after August 1910 when Asquith managed to pilot through Parliament the Accession Declaration Act, with its formula:

"I [monarch's name] do solemnly and sincerely in the presence of God profess, testify and declare that I am a faithful Protestant, and that I will, according to the true intent of the enactments which secure the Protestant succession to the throne of my realm, uphold and maintain the said enactments to the best of my powers according to the law."

After the oaths of succession, the next solemn promises come at the coronation, when the king will respond to three questions of faith and governance put to him by the Archbishop of Canterbury. In 1953 at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth, the longest of the three was a promise to uphold the doctrine, worship, discipline and "all such rights and privileges" of the Church of England. This question was inseparable from her role as Supreme Governor of the Church of England, but it did not inhibit her from developing warm ties with Catholics and acknowledging their achievements.

Constitutional experts have wondered whether, in the more secular Britain of today, there should be a fresh look at the oaths sworn by the sovereign, especially bearing in mind the international role of the Crown. King Charles III is not only the sovereign of the United Kingdom, but head of state of 14 other Commonwealth countries.

IN 2018 the Constitution Unit of University College London, after a careful survey of the history and purpose of the accession and coronation oaths, suggested new ways of reframing the promises. In particular it wondered whether "a modern, plural and democratic state should be involved in the endorsement of religion". It acknowledged that any alteration of the Coronation ceremony would be controversial.

Catholics might be tempted to jib at the emphasis on Protestantism in the royal oaths. But a trimming of the Protestant emphasis might reflect a diminution in the standing of Christianity as a whole. A rewording of the oaths might shake off any residue from their polemical past, but would come at a cost. The late Queen was characterized by a quiet, unshakeable Christian spirituality. The commitments she made at her coronation merged deeply with her Christian beliefs.

Her successors may not all share the same fulsome faith. If so we may still hope that the solemn promises will discreetly encourage them to seek inspiration in the Christian faith that the late Queen often described as her "anchor".

Terry Tastard is a priest and writer. His next book, Nightingale's Nuns and the Crimean War (Bloomsbury Academic), will be published in November.

CHRISTOPHER HOWSE'S NOTEBOOK

At King's Lynn station a wreath of yellow roses hung in tranquillity on the gate



JOHN OSBORNE had an aunt who always said dispiritingly as soon as the last mouthful of Christmas dinner was swallowed: "Well, that's over for another year." So is the mourning over for Queen Elizabeth – the formal mourning.

We're not used to it, as mourning had become part of private bereavement, not a public act like putting the clocks back in autumn. Its effect on radio was unexpected and not unwelcome. In place of the advertised programme, it was announced, here is dusk to dawn in a reed bed, and I groaned – only to be won over by booming bitterns and reeling grasshopper warblers. It was good in a different way to hear the latest on Ukraine from David Aaronovitch's *Briefing Room*. The exact criteria for radio in mourning clothes, I couldn't discern. But I wouldn't mind a bit more.

A FACE that has been crying is not a pretty sight, but the Renaissance painters of figures at the foot of the Cross seem to have got their depiction right, to judge by an unprecedented exercise in television broadcasting. This was the BBC's live streaming of the lying-in-state of Queen Elizabeth over six days.

It held far more human interest than the video of a journey on the trans-Siberian Express, which once convinced me that, much as I love railways, I didn't really want to take that train.

But the people who constantly trickled into the ancient whale-carcass of Westminster Hall had already achieved a strenuous ordeal, queuing for hours – nine, 14, 20. Most then took their cue from the people before them, bowing to the coffin. A few women curtseyed. More people made the Sign of the Cross as time went on. Watching them felt voyeuristic. I don't suppose they bargained on being televised.

They reminded me of the queue by long-distance walkers to embrace the statue of St James above the high altar at Compostela. An unending gallery of characters, this was slow television tuned up to the highest setting.

EVERYONE said how lovely the flowers from the people were, in their islands beneath the trees in Green Park. Some came from gardens, some from profiteering pop-up stalls on the way from home. The sprinkling of cards looked like giant butterflies amid the blooms, but what made the difference was that plastic wrappings were discouraged and discreetly removed when the bouquets were arranged.

It must have been the influence of the King. Round the corner in the Mall he was insistent, as Prince of Wales, on allowing the wide verge by the walls of St James's Palace and Clarence House to grow unmown in spring, and blossom with umbels of wild carrot (also known as Queen Anne's lace) and, I seem to remember, nodding heads of fritillaries.

Leaving plastic wrapping on flowers at the sites of traffic accidents, and notably at Kensington Palace after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, has been a sort of anti-nudge phenomenon. But it was also a mistake about the wrapper's value, as happens with dust jackets on books. First editions are worth half as much without them. A bouquet is in truth devalued with one.

I WAS IN NORFOLK the day before the funeral. Warning went out that travel to London would be crowded and delayed. For my return, I found almost empty carriages. At King's Lynn station a wreath of yellow roses hung in tranquillity on the gate often used by Queen Elizabeth. Delay came not from pressure by funeral-goers but from the drought this summer, which had shrunk the land near Ely, leaving railway tracks to bend and buckle. The trains shied in fear at this sea swell of dry land.

AT ST HENRY Walpole Catholic Church at Burnham Market, sturdily ventilated, they celebrated Mass in peace. The biggest upset had been overnight, when I heard my host call out to his wife: "I've lost my diary. It's very precious." He didn't want something sensational to read on the train, but all the appointments and phone numbers he'd noted down.

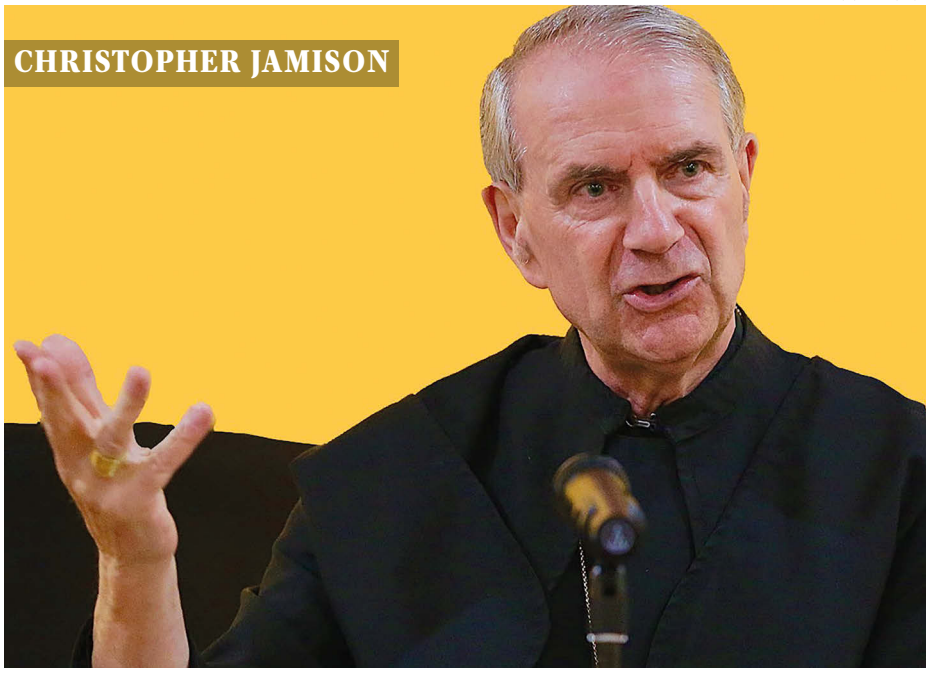
It should be no surprise that, hardly had I asked St Anthony of Padua ("If it's not too much trouble, do you think ..."), than I heard another cry: "It's all right. Found it." I didn't tell him about St Anthony. That will remain between you and me.

Christopher Howse is an assistant editor of The Daily Telegraph.

A monk celebrated for communicating monastic wisdom tells **Maggie Fergusson** that his latest mission is to restore a vital ingredient to our cultural conversation

Amazing grace

PHOTO: ADAM SIMON



NEAR THE start of his new book, *Finding the Language of Grace*, Christopher Jamison quotes arrestingly from Seamus Heaney: "The biggest change in my lifetime has been the evaporation of the transcendent from all our discourse." Jamison came across Heaney's words when he was already deep into writing, and they precisely nailed what he was trying to say: that we have become so engulfed in "transactional language" that many of us have trouble speaking about "the ultimate but mysterious dimensions of life". We need to recognise grace, "the action of God in the world", to rediscover the transcendent – "the dimension beyond the physical, the dimension so many of us now struggle to name". But, for most of us these days, our only contact with the language of grace is through Bible readings, often poorly rendered, at weddings and funerals.

Now 70, but looking considerably younger, Jamison entered Worth Abbey when he was 21. He became headmaster of Worth School and was then elected abbot in 2002 and served one term. He has just been elected for a second term as abbot president of the English Benedictine Congregation. Not all monks would welcome the constant travel and heavy load of deskwork this will involve. But Jamison has developed a particular vocation over the decades to be "both contemplative and creative; to make stuff accessible". He shuttles between a life of prayer, deeply informed by the Rule of St Benedict, and projects that help slake the thirst of the wider world for meaning and faith.

Jamison has been involved in two popular and influential TV series, *The Monastery* (2005) and *The Big Silence* (2010), inviting groups of young people to live out aspects of monastic life. During the pandemic, he worked with the youth charity "Million Minutes" to produce "Alone Together", a web-based resource for people struggling through lockdown. And he has written two highly successful books – *Finding Sanctuary: Monastic Steps for Everyday Life* (2006) and *Finding Happiness: Monastic Steps for a Fulfilling Life* (2008).

But whereas these flowed naturally, one to the next, Jamison has been tussling for years with the concept of a popular book about grace. "I really felt people deserved something in this area: it's so central to Christian faith, and there's so little on it. But the subject of grace is so huge, and so freighted with controversy in the history of the Catholic Church, I just couldn't do it." Then he had a second impulse, "to write a book about language. I'm a linguist by training, and I'd noticed a decline in public discourse in all sorts of ways, the most extreme example being the ease with which social media conveys insult and injury." And then came a eureka moment when he realised that he might write a book "focusing on the way language can be a vehicle for grace, or for disgrace". In eight chapters he draws on writers religious and secular, from the Japanese novelist Shusaku Endo to St John of the Cross, from Thomas More to Stormzy. All of them write about grace not just as a broad concept but as something at work in their own lives.

IT WAS as an undergraduate at Oxford, studying modern languages, deeply involved in the chaplaincy and feeling his way towards monastic life, that Jamison first encountered the language of grace outside a strictly religious context. "It was through the Catholic novel, especially the novels of François Mauriac and Georges Bernanos." Bernanos' *Journal d'un curé de campagne* is "all about a priest who is just hopeless and vilified by everybody – but you know this is where the grace is, in his life. He finally expires in the arms of his disgraced fellow seminarian who is living out of wedlock and has an illegitimate child. And the last line is 'All is grace'."

Mauriac and Bernanos led Jamison on to Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh. It was like gathering jewels. Today he reads widely among contemporary novels, and when we meet he is loving Elif Shafak's *The Island of Missing Trees*. "I try to look for grace," he says, "without going for predictably pious authors." He himself is not by nature pious. He writes with sympathy of Teresa of Avila who used to shake the hourglass to make her 30 minutes of prayer pass more quickly.

So who does he hope will read *Finding the Language of Grace*? Like his previous books, he says, it's aimed at those who consider themselves "spiritual but not religious": "I want people who say they are not religious to re-examine religious traditions, and see whether there might be things of value they are missing out on." Why are people so wary of being thought 'religious', I wonder? Is it because it suggests judgement, rules, moral tripwires? Jamison surprises me by looking back to the Industrial Revolution, when many people moved with the demands of work, and ceased to live in communities and hold beliefs and practices in common.

"And then if you go back to the Sixties, you see a refusal to accept what is inherited: the insistence that 'I have to work it all out for myself. I'm not going to be told what to believe'." So what do people mean when they say 'I'm spiritual'? "They mean, 'I believe in the transcendent', but they haven't got a formal language to describe it."

Grace is at work in everybody's life, Jamison insists, "but when people say they're spiritual but not religious, they're looking for their own language to express their experience of grace. And I say, when the common language of grace goes, we end up with dialects of grace, which can't communicate with each other."

Where does prayer fit into all this, I wonder.

My daughters and their friends might say, "We don't need to pray, we do mindfulness: it's the same thing." Is it? "No! It is not! Mindfulness is not sufficient. It's a very introverted activity to keep yourself steady and calm. It's like going for a run: necessary for well-being. But Christians believe that the real trick is to take mindfulness and turn it into love – or what Peter Tyler calls 'heartfulness'. Christian prayer is an act of love. It's not just about mental health, important though that is."

And unlike mindfulness, Jamison urges, Christian prayer necessarily involves gratitude. He suggests to his readers that they begin each day by saying "Thank you", not least because "to keep giving thanks in the midst of life's trials is to be on the way to overcoming them". He has recently read Mark Dowd's *My Tsunami Journey: The Quest for God in a Broken World*, and is inspired by some of those worst affected by the 2004 tsunami who have actually found their faith in God deepened by it. But I am thinking of some of the men I know in HMP Wandsworth, serving long sentences in grim, cramped conditions, often very frightened of one another. I wouldn't dare suggest to them that they wake up in the morning and make an effort to feel grateful. "Yes. Well, fear is really hard to deal with. It's paralysing. I have no easy answer to that."

DOES A LIFE of grace equate to a happy life, I wonder? One of the writers Jamison focuses on is Gerard Manley Hopkins whose poetry was, in Victorian England, an attempt to put song back into a language grown thin and washed out. No poet has ever more thoroughly embraced the language of grace, and yet Hopkins lived much of his life on the edge of despair. How can that be? "I hesitate to say it, but was being a Jesuit the right context for Hopkins? I think sometimes people are out of their time. It happens in every era, and sometimes I used to see it when I was teaching at Worth. I'd think, 'This kid is just not made for school.'"

Jamison quotes Shusaku Endo as saying this about Catholicism, into which he was baptised at the age of 12: "If I have trust in Catholicism it is because I find in it much more possibility than in any other religion for presenting the full symphony of humanity. The other religions have almost no fullness; they have but solo parts."

Beautiful words, but I'm struck that for some of my friends – especially those divorced, remarried and forbidden Communion – Catholicism seems the opposite of "full": more narrow and life-denying.

"The Church's sexual ethics are both prophetic and deeply problematic," says Jamison. "And sexual ethics dominates our perception of the Catholic Church at the moment. Pope Francis has rightly refused to major on this, concentrating instead on social teaching and mysticism. But when he does deal with sexual ethics, he's brilliant." He cites a brief meeting between the Pope and the gay comedian Stephen K. Amos. Amos told the Pope that, as a gay man, he didn't feel accepted by the Church. The Pope responded: "To emphasise the adjective over the noun is not good. Each of us is a person and has dignity. If this person is like this, or has a tendency like that, it does not change their dignity. Those who want to choose or discard people because of the adjective do not have a human heart." The meeting ended in a tearful embrace. Amos confessed that the Pope's words were "what I'd been searching for, for a long time".

DISCUSSION OF sexual ethics nudges us, unavoidably, towards discussion of the child-abuse scandals, and the grave transgressions, over decades, of Catholic priests and Religious, including many Benedictine monks. What went wrong? "The simple answer is a catastrophic moral failure on the part of the monks, and incompetent management by their superiors. That is a lethal combo." To what extent was celibacy to blame? "You have to remember that the IICSA trials dealt with 13 institutions, of which the Catholic Church was just one. So no, it seems to me it's not celibacy that's the problem, it's a lack of formation in the understanding of sexuality, your own and other people's. That formation, and continuing support in it, needs to be in place, and superiors need to be managing it properly. And superiors must have access to professionals who will manage risky behaviour.

"When I was a young monk, there was no formation in celibacy. Now there is. John Mark Falkenhain, an American Benedictine and psychologist, majors in teaching celibacy to monks. He's devised our whole programme." Meantime, there is now a rigorous selection process for those applying to join monasteries, "even though in an era of few vocations this is very hard".

"Listen with the ear of the heart," counsels St Benedict. For Jamison, "listening to the searing pain of those who survived sexual abuse by clergy" has taken up much of the last few years. But what about the abusers? Is anyone listening to them? "Pastoral care of offenders is a double-edged sword. Some are in prison, some have effectively left the Church and want no contact with it. And if you do go to visit offenders, the victims can say, 'Why didn't you come and visit me?' So listening to offenders is perhaps best left to the professionals."

When he completes this second term as abbot president, Jamison will be 75. Will he ever fully re-enter monastic life? Worth has recently started a new community in Brighton, he says, "a fantastic project: three priests and a brother, who will be taking over a parish. I can see myself eventually being part of that and loving it." Meantime, whatever the stresses and strains of presidential life, he will strive not to grumble. "Just occasionally, St Benedict gets strict, as when he says, 'You must not murmur' – 'You must not complain'. So prayer, yes. Hospitality, yes. But no complaining."



Contemplating change

BY WILLIAM TAYLOR

OVER SUPPER recently, I was telling a friend that we were about to receive a new deacon on secondment from Saint, a resource church here in Hackney in east London, originally a partnership of Holy Trinity Brompton, mighty powerhouse of evangelical vigour in the UK. He nearly choked on his lemon posset. Had I completely lost my good sense? How could they possibly help us?

Well, for starters, I said, their churches are growing and ours are not. At least mine isn't. "Forgive me for speaking frankly, Father," he said, "but you should be more confident in the power of the sacraments. If you follow down this track, it'll start with worship songs and then before you can say your vesting prayers they'll be telling you to ditch your chasuble in order to make the service more accessible." He said the word "accessible" as though he had just bitten on a pip.

I didn't dare tell Fr Frank that I had already ditched my chasuble when presiding at the Mass. In the Anglo-Catholic world, these signifiers matter. In the wake of the Oxford Movement and the revival of sacramental theology in the nineteenth century, our predecessors fought hard for the right to wear lace in the sanctuary, largely in defiance of those who saw it all as a further step on the slippery slope to Rome.

Some Anglican clergy ended up in prison and others in the ecclesiastical courts. This included, in 1865, a predecessor vicar of my own church after appearing in the pulpit on the last Sunday after Trinity wearing a surplice instead of a black gown. His churchwardens slammed out of their box pews and immediately filed a petition of complaint.



Mind you, by the time Fr Kingsford died in post more than 30 years later, the clergy and choir were all fully surpliced and the congregation was happily swinging with the incense. He took the long view and compromised where necessary. Now there's a photograph of him in the vestry in his clerical frock coat looking altogether very jolly and sporting a beard that would not be out of place on the face of a Hackney hipster.

Today the Anglo-Catholic corner of the Church of England is at a low ebb. Where these churches had once driven mission, many now, including my own, are barely viable. It's the charismatic evangelical churches which are on the march, particularly among young people. It's actually also these churches that are showing most sustained and quizzical interest in the patterns of prayer and discipleship that have their roots in the contemplative tradition. Some of these millennials are reimagining our disciplines of formation for a new season and we have things to learn from them too. Another HTB-inspired church in London devised an app during lockdown to help small groups follow a rule of life which includes, among others, the Ignatian practice of the daily Examen.

I lent Toby a stole for his ordination at St Paul's Cathedral and on the following day, the Feast of St Thomas, he came to deacon our Patronal Mass. He processed into church carrying aloft the Book of the Gospels and bowed and genuflected in all the right places and went full pelt with the thurible when called upon to do so. There was no mention of worship songs.

AS WE RECOVER from Covid, we need to work out how we will adapt to survive. What do we let go of? What new life do we welcome? My church council has decided we need to invest in some help and now we have the makings of a little staff team.

There is Petra, who is coming to dig me out of my administrative black hole, and Karah, who is coming to help us set up our children's ministry. In addition to Toby we also have Joe, who is the director of a local charity, Clapton Commons, which is helping us regenerate our undercroft spaces for the community.

We all meet around the table in the vestry. It's actually a bit of a squash. Looking around us, Joe asks whether we could turn the vestry into more of a parish office.

"It would mean rearranging the furniture a bit," he says, pointing into the corner, "and we would have to move that thing out."

"But that's my vesting table," I say, barely concealing my panic.

All the while Fr Kingsford looks down upon us benignly. It may be a confusing time (I hear him whisper), but you need to take the long view.

William Taylor is the vicar of St Thomas' Church, Clapton Common, east London. He is the author of This Bright Field.

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A beautiful holiday in northern Italy became a reminder to look, think, pray and act / **By BENEDICT ROGERS**

The way of the saints

WALKING UP the hill out of Arona to the massive "Sancarlone" on the Monte San Carlo in the sweltering Italian August heat takes some effort, but the strenuous hike can be a spiritual experience. I emerged, covered in sweat, at the top of the hill, to be confronted by a 23.5-metre copper statue of St Charles Borromeo atop an 11.5-metre granite pedestal. I prayed in the nearby church dedicated to him and reflected on his extraordinary life.

When I was received into the Catholic Church on Palm Sunday nine years ago by Cardinal Charles Bo in Yangon's St Mary's Cathedral, I was asked: "Who have you chosen as your baptismal saint?" Despite all my preparation, including reading the Catechism from start to finish, the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, several papal encyclicals, and the works of, among others, G.K. Chesterton, Malcolm Muggeridge, St John Henry Newman, St Teresa of Kolkata, Henri de Lubac and Hans Urs von Balthasar, I had given little thought to what saint's name I would take. I was happy with Benedict. But in honour of the man who had inspired me and who would receive me into the Church I said I'd choose the same saint as him: St Charles Borromeo.

Only after doing so did I start to get to know this great sixteenth-century prince of the Church, one of the driving forces of the Counter-Reformation. And it was only by visiting the statue, erected in honour of his canonisation, that I came to appreciate what a great saint he was. I had wondered why a poor family in rural central Myanmar had named their son Charles Bo, after an archbishop of Milan who came from Italian nobility. They weren't to know that he would go on to be a priest, an archbishop and his country's first ever cardinal – and a prophetic voice for the poor, the oppressed and the persecuted.

ON THAT hilltop outside Arona, overlooking Lake Maggiore and near the ancestral castle that was the home of Charles Borromeo's family, I learned that he had sold one of his family's estates and gave the proceeds to the poor; had visited victims of the Plague and stripped himself of his own possessions to assist them; had survived an assassination attempt while praying in his private chapel; had been tireless in caring for his flock; and, as he lay dying, had asked for a picture of Jesus praying in Gethsemene to be placed in front of his bed.

A few days later, I travelled to the nearby Orta San Giulio, on the banks of Lake Orta, one of the smallest but most beautiful lakes of northern Italy. I swam and kayaked and went to Mass in the Basilica di San Giulio on the island in the middle of the lake. Afterwards, I followed the "Way of Silence", a walk around the island that passes wall plaques inscribed with short quotes. "Silence is the language of love," one said. "Silence is truth and prayer," said another. In the work I do – advocacy for human rights – I lament that the world is too often silent about things that matter. But here I realised that too much noise often crowds out love and prayer.

PHOTO: ALAMY, FABRIZIO ROBBA



Statue of St Charles Borromeo at Arona in Italy

I climbed to Orta's Sacro Monte, with 21 small chapels built in lush parkland between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. I prayed, and I asked the great saints – St Charles Borromeo, St Benedict, St Francis of Assisi and others – to pray for our world today and for our leaders, who often seem so mediocre by comparison.

I WAS NOT alone on my journey. In my imagination I had two companions by my side. One was my late friend Shahbaz Bhatti, Pakistan's former minister for minorities affairs and its great Christian champion of religious freedom. I knew Shahbaz well and worked closely with him. Shahbaz was assassinated in 2011 and the cause for his canonisation has begun. It should be expedited. His personal Bible is on display in the Basilica di San Bartolomeo all'Isola in Rome as part of a permanent commemoration of modern-day martyrs, and every time I am in Rome, I make a personal pilgrimage to go to pray before the Bible of my martyred friend.

My other companion was an Austrian Jewish novelist, dramatist, journalist and philosopher, Stefan Zweig. His book, *The World of Yesterday*, was introduced to me by a friend and mentor, the last Governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten. Zweig saw Europe torn apart, first by the Great War, then by the rise of the Nazis. He committed suicide, with his wife, in Brazil in 1942, unable to see how light could ever replace the horrific darkness that had engulfed the world.

"The world's conscience was silent or grumbled only a little before it forgot and forgave," Zweig wrote in 1938. "Those days, when the cries for help from home rang out daily, when I knew that my closest friends had been abducted, tortured and humiliated, and when I trembled helplessly for everyone I loved, were some of the most terrible days of my life."

Zweig's words, and cries for help from Myanmar, North Korea, Hong Kong, China and Ukraine, and from Uyghur, Tibetan and other friends, ring not only in my ears but in my soul. We should reflect on the lives of the saints and learn from them, but we should read Zweig's warnings, too. Go to that hilltop outside Arona and implore St Charles Borromeo to help those whose freedoms are being crushed; go to that island in Lake Orta and call on St Benedict; go to that sacred hill above Orta San Giulio and ask St Francis to intercede. I had a beautiful holiday. I swam, slept, ate, read, drank and rested. But it left me more worried for the world than ever, and more determined to pray and act.

Benedict Rogers is co-founder and Chief Executive of Hong Kong Watch, Senior Analyst for East Asia at Christian Solidarity Worldwide, and author of six books. His new book, The China Nexus: Thirty Years In and Around the Chinese Communist Party's Tyranny, will be published in October.

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Our bitter harvest

BY AUSTEN IVEREIGH

FOR THE FIRST time since I chose to belong to this land, I have felt as if in my own body the urgency of its thirst. The psalmist's analogies speak loud: the parched land craving showers like a shrivelled soul pining for the mercy of God, who sends down rain on the just and unjust alike, because all need to live.

Heat and prolonged drought – even the crazy temperatures we had this summer, when my polytunnel was a colony of Arabia – can be endured by most plants, as long as they have water to draw from their roots to bring up nutrients from the soil and to cool the leaves by evaporation. But that calls for living soil: carbon-rich, full of biological life, shaded by leaves or mulch. The water-absorbing and water-retentive capacity of such soil is astonishing.

But if the soil is poor – as almost all is, in modern ag-land – the opposite is true. The soil dries and compacts, so that water comes and just runs off: hence flash floods. When water levels are low at the roots, the stomata close up to preserve water; plants overheat and die.

This winter we'll all feel the impact of the drought harvests, which came on top of the soaring fuel and fertiliser costs in the wake of Putin's tanks. Round here, the farmers chose to sow much less in order not to be caught short; now they can't sow winter crops because the clay earth is hard and cracked.

The soil emergency we face in these islands has long been concealed by a great blessing: enough rain falling in one half of the year to irrigate the aquifers and subsoil in the other half. But that is now changing. This year, the baking summer came after one of the driest winter-springs on record. Go down a few inches and the soil is crumble-dry. Once my rainfall harvesting tanks were empty and the pump had nothing to draw from the 18-foot-deep well, I had to reach for the hosepipe to save young hedge plants and tree saplings.

But where I've helped build living soil, above all in the veg beds – packed with water-retaining, carbon-rich organic matter, mulched with compost and straw – they and the veg in them have fared well. Even if it weren't an urgent necessity to forestall climate change, we would still have no choice but to build such living soil: these summers will increasingly be the norm.



In caring for the land and the creatures on it, I have grown closer to both. But I am angry that decades ago Big Oil's boffins warned their bosses that around this time in the early twenty-first century, great swathes of the planet would dry to deserts, unable to host life. They urged a shift from fossil fuels into other forms of energy. But then oil prices soared and the bosses instead funded pseudoscience to cast doubt on those findings, forestalling our wake-up call by decades.

So you see: the parched land is not just a metaphor for sinful greed, but its bitter, shrivelled fruit.

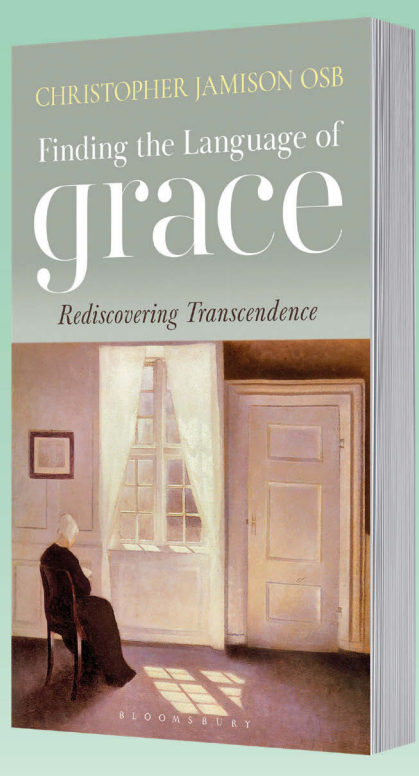
Papal biographer **Austen Ivereigh** moved with his wife and dogs to a small farm near Hereford with old barns and some acres, full of talk of regeneration. He blames Laudato Si'.

Finding the Language of
grace

'Demonstrates brilliantly how poetry and literature open for us a language of grace.'
Timothy Radcliffe

'Not only intellectually sound but deeply emotionally literate.'
Baroness Sheila Hollins

OUT NOW



BLOOMSBURY CONTINUUM

diary@thetablet.co.uk

Jesuits making history

THERE ARE different accounts of how we got there, but one of the most striking developments in the history of the Church is the gradual congealing of authority at the top, a process that has accelerated over the past century. The man usually credited with branding this phenomenon "the papalisation of the Church", the American Jesuit historian, Renaissance scholar and educator John O'Malley, died on 11 September 2022. He was 95.

O'Malley saw the Second Vatican Council as a valiant attempt to redress the balance between the authority of the centre and the periphery. After two popes less than enthusiastic about loosening the leash, O'Malley saw Francis as one who "seeks to reverse the papalisation trajectory of recent history". Born in Ohio, O'Malley joined the Society of Jesus when he was 18. His *The First Jesuits* (1993) contributed significantly to the revival of Ignatian spirituality. *What Happened at Vatican II* (2008) reawakened worldwide interest in the council. He then added compelling books on Trent and Vatican I, and summarised their implications and limitations in *When Bishops Meet* (2019).



Fellow Georgetown historian John Borelli tells us: "O'Malley was a rhetorician, and many appreciated him for his appealing essays on the historical roots of contemporary themes in church life. His *Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome* (1979) communicated a fundamental characteristic of his later work – recognise the language the actors are using and you will understand accurately their message. His *Four Cultures of the West* (2004) demonstrated how each uses language conceptually and linguistically, often failing to communicate to those working out of the others."

O'Malley admired the humanist reformer Erasmus. Some predict that he will be seen to have played a similar historical role.

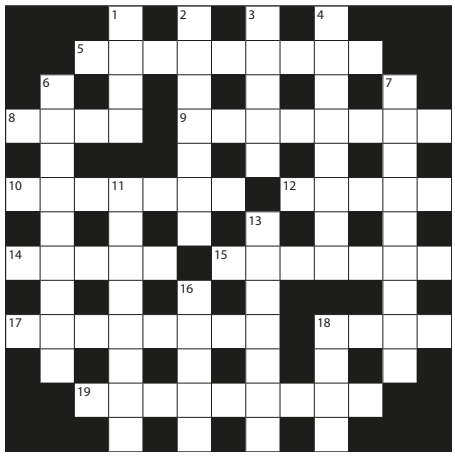
LAST WEEK the Church celebrated the feast day of another weather-changing Jesuit, St Robert Bellarmine. One of the Counter-Reformation's theological movers and shakers, the cardinal spent much of his working life as an inquisitor and censor. Labouring in the vineyard of *The Index of Forbidden Books*, he was the pointman for the Galileo affair. As related in a new history of *The Index* by Robin Vose, it wasn't a role that entirely suited the irenic, meditative Bellarmine.

Confirmation that he might be in the wrong job was delivered by the cantankerous Pope Sixtus V, who put Bellarmine's own writings on the banned list. The cardinal was sanguine: "I hardly ever read a book myself without feeling in the mood to give it a good censoring." He got his own back: the next pope put him in charge of suppressing Sixtus' shonky translation of the Bible. Bellarmine garnered a few votes in the conclaves of his day, but his brother cardinals considered his trotters unsuitable to wear the shoes of the fisherman.

The Jesuits would have to wait another four centuries to get one of their own in Peter's Chair. By then *The Index* had peacefully expired under papal anaesthetic.

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 823 Enigma



Across

5 A thousand slim boys represent an idea (9)
8 Laugh at an unfinished implement; it's a prank! (4)
9 Shows amusement over Luther foolishly dividing the silver (8)
10 One looks down in the mouth (7)
12 Holy tipple for pigs (5)
14 The taxi is not outside the hut (5)
15 Family approached an obliging left-winger (7)
17 Seeking an animal? Put it off a little bit (8)
18 You and I and a member of the press are not welcome in the garden (4)
19 Win an alternative to a follower (9)

Down

1 They say the creature has connections (4)
2 The sailor spilled the oil. Be quiet and get rid of it! (7)
3 What you do to the rule of law, noisy thug! (5)
4 Had nothing to do with what the first two escapees ate (8)
6 A pre-sale sample of forest tea (9)
7 Wandered aimlessly with the crossword compiler and the wounded deer (9)
11 Where one finds judge, jury, counsel and accused taking healthy exercise as an experiment (5, 3)
13 To have enough room beside the lake brings physical well-being (7)
16 Abandon policeman heading for Torquay Castle hotel (5)
18 Which person? Object to this question! (4)

Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 24 September, The Tablet, 1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 0GY. Email: thetablet@thetablet.co.uk, with Crossword in the subject field. Please include your full name, telephone number and email address, and a mailing address. Three books – on God, Miracles and Pilgrimage – from the OUP's Very Short Introduction series will go to the sender of the first correct entry drawn at random.

We are processing entries but there may be a delay in notifying winners and sending out prizes. Please keep entering.

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SUDOKU | Hard

		8		6				
2					5		1	6
9	5							
			7				2	4
					8	1		
			9				3	7
5	1							
8					3		9	2
		4		9				

Each 3x3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9.

Solution to the 3 September puzzle

7	8	6	4	5	2	9	1	3
1	9	4	6	3	7	2	5	8
5	2	3	8	9	1	7	6	4
9	4	2	1	8	5	3	7	6
3	5	1	7	2	6	4	8	9
6	7	8	9	4	3	5	2	1
2	1	9	3	7	8	6	4	5
8	3	5	2	6	4	1	9	7
4	6	7	5	1	9	8	3	2

Solution to the 3 September crossword No. 820

Across: 7 Pesach; 8 Sandal; 10 Thurber; 11 Exile; 12 Goth; 13 Snake; 17 Maria; 18 Hair; 22 Omaha; 23 Lepidus; 24 Iceman; 25 Alfred.
Down: 1 Upstage; 2 Asquith; 3 Scuba; 4 Pavelka; 5 Idris; 6 Glees; 9 Principle; 14 Faraday; 15 Pandora; 16 Prosody; 19 Rodin; 20 Cadet; 21 Opals.

LETTERS

·THE EDITOR OF THE TABLET·

1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 0GY letters@thetablet.co.uk

All correspondence, including email, must give a full postal address and contact telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to shorten letters.

Rich and poor

● I wonder how many readers noticed the revealing juxtaposition of two very different items on page 13 of *The Tablet* for 10 September.

The top half of the page carried head teacher Andrew O'Neill's heartfelt piece on the financial crisis in his Catholic state school in "one of the poorest parts of London". Below is a glossy advertisement for an independent Catholic girls' school "set in the beautiful Sussex countryside".

The north Kensington state school is "providing food banks and working with charities to find financial support for the most needy". At the same time, the head has to pay a thoroughly deserved 5 per cent increase in teachers' salaries out of existing funds. This can only be achieved by the curtailment of opportunities for learning outside the curriculum.

The Sussex school, on the other hand, among an impressively wide range of extra-curricular cultural and sporting activities, is able to offer a "state of the art equestrian centre". The termly full boarding fees, excluding these activities, are £12,795. There is, however, apparently no charge for Days of Recollection.

And so, in our schools, as in society at large, the chasm between rich and poor grows ever wider, a gulf that surely will be made greater by the new Chancellor of the Exchequer's proposal to remove the cap on City bonuses. Ending the charitable status of independent schools might be a more humane and Christian way forward.

JAMES DE RENNES
CLAYGATE, SURREY

Women's work

● Terry Prendergast (Letters, 10 September) wonders why women remain in the Church.

I was organist in my parish from the age of 12; as a young parent I led children's liturgies; as a teacher, formed choirs and music groups involving numerous young people. For the past 21 years as employed pastoral assistant to a parish, my day-to-day life has been living and giving to my Catholic faith and community. But over these past 50 years I have very often been talked down to and patronised, not acknowledged as co-equal, my work and initiatives sometimes dismissed. I am representative of the many women who have given their loyalty to a male-dominated institution that without our nurturing could not exist.

I stay for several reasons, most of all because of the appreciation at ground level by those to whom my femininity and lowliness have relevance. I stay also because of the good laymen and clergy who have treated me as equal, hoping this acceptance will eventually influence the hierarchal decision-makers whose gender-limited formation does not always understand the potential of partnership with women.

ALISON CONCANNON KENNEDY
LEICESTER

● The photographs of the seven women carrying parasols who were arrested by police at the Vatican last month spoke a lot more than a thousand words. Presumably the low-key, witty and inoffensive protest on behalf women's ordination was found to be just too intimidating by the 198 senior prelates gathered there, ironically, to discuss constitutional reform within the Church.

ANDREA KELLY
LONDON N1

Modern slavery

● More than 25 years ago, I protested when it became known that unaccompanied immigrant children were

TOPIC OF THE WEEK

Opportunity to heal Churches' rift

THANK YOU for your special edition of 17 September fittingly marking the death of Queen Elizabeth II and celebrating her outstanding life of service. At the heart of that life lay her deep Christian faith, which she expressed so movingly in her Christmas Day broadcasts, as, for example, when she said: "For me, the life of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace ... is an inspiration and an anchor in my life." We should be thankful for that powerful witness.

Fr Rodney Schofield (Letters, 17 September) is right when he says that there is now an unparalleled opportunity for the Catholic Church to seek reconciliation with our sister Anglican Church. Could Archbishop Justin Welby have been implicitly giving that very message when he concluded the prayers at the Queen's funeral service in Westminster Abbey by quoting Cardinal St John Henry Newman's words: "Go forth upon thy journey Christian soul"?

Will the leaders of our two Churches now seize the unique opportunity given by this special moment? It has been said that, following the work of Arcic, there is now 95 per cent agreement on doctrine. Surely this is the time to work and pray for that final 5 per cent difference to be resolved?

JOHN MULHOLLAND
ALTRINCHAM, CHESHIRE

IN YOUR editorial on the monarchy (17 September) you suggest that those with the eyes to see it can detect "more than a trace of holiness, even saintliness", in the late Queen. Cardinal Nichols is reported elsewhere as saying that "the Christian faith marked every day of her life and activity".

Should Catholics not have the courage of their convictions and take whatever steps may be necessary to put Queen Elizabeth II on the path to sainthood?

GRAHAM RHYS-JONES
BRADFORD PEVERELL, DORSET

IS THERE any reason why Queen Elizabeth II should not be considered for canonisation, other than that, due to her unique position, she was on the "wrong" side of the line between the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church?

ALAN PAVELIN
CHISLEHURST, KENT

THE TABLET'S editorial on the death of Queen Elizabeth II (17 September) refers to two questionable concepts.

A "theology of kingship" must be considered long defunct. In fact it seems royalty should never have appeared among God's people. In the First Book of Samuel (8: 1-22), God through Samuel is heard frustratedly allowing the people to seek a king to rule over them even though God and Samuel know this is a very bad proposal. God's later-covenant people, Christians, understand that Christ's Kingdom is not the kind of kingdom over which earthly rulers reign.

Seeking to "foster ... the military virtues" is an unchristian project. There are no such things. In March this year Pope Francis in two different addresses (to Patriarch Kirill and to an international education congress) made it clear that the concept of a "just war" deserves to be thrown out.

GERARD HORE
ARMIDALE, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA

LETTERS

escaping from local authority homes where they had been temporarily placed. After that I was privileged to meet Kevin Hyland, the former anti-slavery commissioner, and some religious sisters who were providing safe houses for trafficked people of all ages.

Sarah Mac Donald's article "Breaking the chains" (10 September) describes how in Ireland the Church and Catholic schools are working with young people to raise consciousness of these complex issues. Prostitution and other forms of slave labour can destroy a person's self-respect and well-being. I trust, therefore, that Catholic schools and youth organisations in Britain will learn from this example of good practice and report malpractices, wherever they find them.

(LORD) HYLTON
HEMINGTON, SOMERSET

Too few priests

● Michael J. Walsh (Letters, 17 September) argues that allowing ordination of women and married men is a change which should be advanced on its own merits in the hope it might help reduce priest shortage. Agreed. But why, then, are those "merits" never discussed? In particular, why is no case for maintaining the status quo ever made?

We are asked to accept, as a given, that well over half of humanity is debarred from ordination simply by their gender or marital status, irrespective of how well qualified they may be or how genuine their vocation. Surely such an extraordinary proposition deserves at least some explanation. Yet it seems we are discouraged from even discussing it. In 90 years of Catholic life I have hardly ever seen or heard anyone, from bishops down, put forward an argument in support of it, and never one that made any sense.

COLIN McDONALD
CAMBERLEY, SURREY

● Michael J. Walsh's letter about liberalising ordination mentions "the desired result" – more priests. But perhaps we are being called to create a different shape of Church, with a different understanding of the priestly role, a priesthood without a clerical caste. After all, if to the Lord 1,000 years are as a day, we are still very early in the Church's first week, and we have much to learn.

JOHN AND CATHY DUFFY
HUDDERSFIELD, WEST YORKSHIRE

Wrong relics

● A devotee of St Bernadette, and a regular pilgrim to Lourdes, I was minded to make the journey to venerate Bernadette's relics now on tour in England. I was prompted by my wife to reconsider my intention.

It's one thing, she argued, to venerate the relics of the True Cross, or one of the ropes by which our martyrs hanged, but quite another to detach for our supposed benefit a small piece from Bernadette's body, which lies, originally whole and intact, at the convent at Nevers. In her view, this was an inappropriate way of expressing our devotion to a much-loved saint. I now agree with her.

JOHN HARTLEY
NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME, STAFFORDSHIRE

● Sue Oakley (Letters, 17 September) raises an interesting issue regarding the Catholic use of saintly relics (in this case St Bernadette) as a form of spiritual communication and veneration.

The Catholic Church acknowledges that physical remains of a saint do not have magical powers, and nothing in the Bible suggests otherwise. Miracles are performed by God. Relics are not needed.

We feel veneration for things and people to which we are devoted already as a result of a personal spiritual stimulus. Veneration of relics will only discover depth and richness when those who participate in it are engaged authentically with their fellow Christians in other suitable dimensions of life. They do not have to rely upon a clerical imposition of relics.

PETER BIRKS
FRESHWATER, ISLE OF WIGHT

Nonsense vote

● Julia Langdon is right that the method of election of our current prime minister by the Conservative Party membership makes a dangerous nonsense of the concept of representative democracy ("The honeymoon is already over", 10 September).

But what about our first-past-the-post electoral system, which in 2019 gave Boris Johnson an 80-seat majority with 43.6 per cent of the vote?

PETER ENTWISTLE
TUNBRIDGE WELLS, KENT

Least worst

● Both the war in Ukraine and the morality of abortion have featured in recent letters. This prompts the thought that, just as we have a theology of the just war, surely we need a theology of the just abortion.

No one thinks killing is a good idea; but tragically, war is sometimes the least worst option. In a similar way, Christians are unlikely to argue that abortion is good per se, but many will have come across tragic circumstances where abortion is the least worst option.

MARIE BRIDGE
EYNSHAM, OXFORDSHIRE

THE LIVING SPIRIT

AND LITURGICAL CALENDAR

My love, when will you tell my body to return to dust, so that my liberated soul can soar on high to you, her God and living source? The divine rays streaming from your throne reach me and fill my whole being with the pure light of your loving kindness. So why do you leave this poor and helpless leaf so long on the tree, to be shaken and buffeted by the fierce storms of this world?

My love, watch over me at the hour of my death. Mark me out now so that I know you will be with me then, and your goodness, my only support during that time which we must all endure, will exclude anything that might harm my soul.

ST GERTRUDE
FROM *CONSECRATED SPIRITS: A THOUSAND YEARS OF SPIRITUAL WRITINGS BY WOMEN RELIGIOUS*, ED. FELICITY LENG (CANTERBURY PRESS, 2011)



Prayer is the strength of the Christian and of every person who believes. In the weakness and frailty of our lives, we can turn to God with the confidence of children and enter into communion with him. In the face of so many wounds that hurt us and harden our hearts, we are called to dive into the sea of prayer, which is the sea of God's boundless love, to taste his tenderness.

POPE FRANCIS
HOMILY, BASILICA OF SANTA SABINA, 5 MARCH 2014

No human creature could receive or contain so vast a flood of love and joy as I often felt after the birth of my child. With this came the need to worship, to adore. I had heard many say that they wanted to worship God in their own way and did not need a Church in which to praise him, nor a body of people with whom to associate themselves. But I did not agree to this. My very experience as a radical, my whole make-up, led me to want to associate myself with others, with the masses, in loving and praising God.

DOROTHY DAY
FROM *THE LONG LONELINESS* (HARPER, NEW YORK, 1952)

CALENDAR

Sunday 25 September:
Twenty-Sixth Sunday of the Year: (Year C)
Monday 26 September:
Feria or Sts Cosmas and Damian, Martyrs
Tuesday 27 September:
St Vincent de Paul, Priest
Wednesday 28 September:
Feria or St Wenceslaus, Martyr or St Lawrence Ruiz and Companions, Martyrs
Thursday 29 September:
Sts Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels
Friday 30 September:
St Jerome, Priest & Doctor
Saturday 1 October:
St Thérèse of the Child Jesus, Virgin & Doctor
Sunday 2 October:
Twenty-Seventh Sunday of the Year

✦✦✦

For the calendar for the Missal of 1962 go to **www.lms.org.uk**

A Joan for all seasons

As a new, non-binary Joan of Arc appears on stage at the Globe, **Mark Lawson** looks back at the many Joans of history

IMAGES – MAIN: HELEN MURRAY; INSET: ALAMY/KEYSTONE USA; RIGHT, ALAMY/SILVERSCREEN



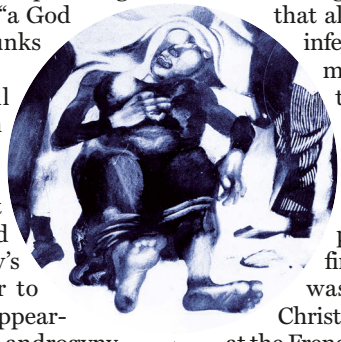
NEVER LACKING in confidence or competition, George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) considered himself a greater playwright than Shakespeare and once wrote a short play in which they verbally duelled for supremacy.

If his spirit has access to writing materials, Shaw may now be working on an emergency debate drama featuring himself and the young dramatist Charlie Josephine.

In 1923, Shaw premiered *Saint Joan*, his epic tragedy about Joan of Arc, which remains widely performed. The most recent London production, at the Donmar Warehouse in 2017, starred Gemma Arterton as the farm girl who becomes a rebel leader and war heroine before being persecuted and burned.

Shaw's is one of an estimated more than 400 literary or musical retellings of Joan's story across 800 years, a vast pyre of pages to which is now added *I, Joan*, Charlie Josephine's version of the legend that has just opened at Shakespeare's Globe in London. This Joan is, linguistically at least, no longer a heroine or, alternatively, equally a hero: the character identifies as non-binary, always described in stage directions as "they" or "them", the preferred pronouns as well of Josephine and the actor in the title role, Isobel Thom.

Though the play is set, like Shaw's, in medieval times, Josephine's Joan preaches a very recent creed. While non-binary, they also embody another resurgent identity that, by choosing a gender that differs from the birth one, is by definition binary. "Trans people are sacred," Joan's opening speech declares. "We are the divine. We are practising our divinity by expressing authenticity." Their God is "a God for the queers, and the drunks … a God for the Godless."



Many historians will find this personification inaccurate; some Catholics, blasphemous. But one of the charges against Joan was that she looked, dressed and fought like a man – Shaw's Inquisitor commands her to become more feminine in appearance – and, in making this androgyny more modern, Josephine is only doing what has always been done: reshaping the holy soldier to suit the message of the teller.

Marina Warner's great book *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (1981) tracks the way the Maid of Orleans has successively become what eras needed her to be.

So, while Shaw offered his Joan, Josephine presents theirs, though, with Shavian self-confidence, giving the protagonist the view that all earlier versions have been inferior: "Men have written about me a lot. And most of the words they chose were wrong. It's embarrassing, really, how much they've all missed the point."

Presumably calculated as a provocation, this succeeds. The first recorded work about Joan was written by a woman, Christine de Pizan, an Italian poet at the French court, latterly rediscovered by feminist academics. De Pizan's "Song of Joan of Arc" was published in 1429, during the subject's lifetime. And, three decades before Shaw, a woman playwright had two dramas about Joan performed, although they are likely to have been somewhat pious for most tastes as they were written by a French nun for performance in her convent: the author of "The Mission of Joan of Arc" (1894) and its sequel "Joan of Arc Completes her Mission" (1895) is now known as St Thérèse of Lisieux, playwright canonised five years after her protagonist.

And, despite the sweeping dismissal in *I, Joan* of male takes on the tale, the men have had different ends, even religiously.

AT THE canonisation of Saint Joan in 1920, the Catholic Church made much of her being a "maid", commending her to young Catholic women as a model of virginity. The character's chastity, though, had been lower in the motivations of the French cardinals petitioning Pope Benedict XV for Joan's sainthood. Virginity as an absolute ideal would have thwarted France's desperate need

Isobel Thom (left) at the Globe; (inset) detail from a Michael Mathias Prechtl painting of Brecht's Saint Joan of the Stockyards; (right) 1948 poster for Ingrid Bergman's film version

to repeople itself after losing two million citizens in the First World War; for the clergy, Joan was most useful as an exemplary French martyr.

Shakespeare turned the legend to anti-Catholic and anti-French purpose likely to please the Protestant and paranoid court of Queen Elizabeth I: in *Henry VI, Part 1*, usually dated to around 1592, "Joan *la pucelle*" (a French word for maid or virgin often attached to Joan), is exposed as fake in her piety and deserving, as a servant of the perfidious French, of burning. At the stake, the "holy virgin" reveals that she is pregnant with the child of a married man, although the English joke that she has been so promiscuous, she can't possibly know the father. Joan's brief hope that pregnancy may encourage clemency fails, and the Duke of York (later Richard III) cruelly orders a two-for-one inferno with the words: "Strumpet, thy words condemn thy brat and thee. Use no entreaty, for it is in vain."

IN SAINT JOAN, Shaw, as so often, was writing against Shakespeare, objecting, in both play and preface, to the "strumpet" spin in *Henry VI*. Shaw himself, though, equally creates a Joan after his own heart.

The playwright's personal ideology and dramatic method were based around the idea that Proposition A could only be accepted once Proposition B had been lengthily weighted against it. So, characteristically, *Saint Joan* challenged the general consensus that Joan's inquisition and incineration were show trials, always designed to find her guilty. Shaw suggests that the central allegation of heresy against Joan – claiming to be directed personally by God – was, in canon legal terms, correct, the idea of being under direct instruction from above being as rightly concerning for clergy as for psychiatrists.

But, though queasy about the claimed provenance of Joan's mission, Shaw, a prolific pamphleteer for the Fabian Society, admired her critiques of State and Church.

At its London premiere in 1924 (Shaw had first staged the play in New York, nervous of the recent reception of his work by British critics), *Saint Joan* was reviewed by T.S. Eliot, who objected that the heroine had become a sort of She-Shaw: "His Joan of Arc is perhaps the greatest sacrilege of all Joans: for instead of the saint or the strumpet of the legends to which he objects, he has turned her into a great middle-class reformer."

For the first five centuries of the Joan cult, major works about her turned up roughly every few decades, until a glut in the mid twentieth century, as the Second World War encouraged interest in a warrior queen and resister of tyranny.

Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956), a German exiled in Europe and the US, who had made



Joan a Chicago union activist in *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* (1930), returned to the character twice in *The Visions of Simone Machard* (1942), where Joan inspires a young girl during the Second World War, and *The Trial of Joan of Arc* (1952), written back in what was now East Berlin. Brecht was interested, as Shaw had been, in Joan as a dissenter. In the same period, Jean Anouilh's *The Lark* (1952) used the legend to explore resistance and collaboration in wartime France.

The argument over what the historical figure represented was itself dramatised in Maxwell Anderson's Broadway play, *Joan of Lorraine* (1946), in which an actress and director staging a play about Joan can't agree on the characterisation, although Hollywood, after buying the film rights, was sure she represented virtue and strength, cutting out the framing device in favour of straight hagiography in *Joan of Arc* (1948), winning Ingrid Bergman an Oscar nomination.

A next sustained wave of works started in the 1970s, reflecting feminist interest in a strong historical example of independence and strength. Liberals, though, struggled with someone celebrated for virginity and heavenly messages, so the character was refracted through more progressive identities: feminist rock in a 1972 song by Patti Smith, then lesbianism in Carolyn Gage's play *The Second Coming of Joan of Arc* (1994) and Ulrike Ottinger's movie *Joan of Arc of Mongolia* (1989).

So *I, Joan* extends, rather than institutes, revisionism of the story. As it happens, next year marks the centenary of the premiere of Shaw's play and perhaps the Globe should consider staging it alongside a revival of the latest attempt to recruit the Maid of Orleans to a contemporary cause.

I, Joan, shakespearesglobe.com, until 22 October.

RADIO

Drinking in the faith

God and the breweries

D.J. TAYLOR

Heart and Soul: The Church and Beer
BBC WORLD SERVICE

PRODUCING and presenting "The Church and Beer" (16 September) was clearly a dream assignment for Geoff Bird. We first encountered him at the Benedictine nunnery of Maredret in Belgium, making jokes about the "holy spirit" and attending to details of a brewing process first set down by St Hildegard of Bingen back in the eleventh century. "All the sisters like the beer," Sr Gertrude solemnly assured him. It also played a valuable role in their mission: the proceeds were expected to pay for restoration work on the roof and the abbey's exterior.

As for first principles, the connection between beer and the religious life was hundreds if not thousands of years old. Never mind St Hildegard: Chaucer's friar in *The Canterbury Tales* had boasted of "knowing the taverns, every one, and every good host, too". There was precedent in the activities of the Benedictine sisters, for brewing had traditionally been a women's preserve, practised by the medieval "ale-wife". None of which had stopped

> 'All the sisters like the beer': the proceeds were expected to pay for restoration work on the roof and abbey exterior

a monastery at Grimbergen from installing a micro-brewery on the site, which was now pumping out three million bottles a year.

Bird was not merely there to sample the product, inspect the hop-bines or run his hands through the 26 varieties of herbs grown in the monastery garden whose introduction to the mix not only helped make the beer more bitter but worked as a preservative. He was determined to find a link between beer and worship. If a trip to a pub in Altrincham with a pagan landlord keen on "ritual" didn't properly serve this end, he was on firmer ground with Stacey, proprietress of a bar in Harlem ("it's all really a vibe") raising money for a series of scholarships for the black community known as "Harlem Hopes".

It was the same back in England with "the St Arnold Project", named after the patron saint of brewers, whose volunteers go into pubs and bars to talk to the clientele, and the Palestinian brewery producing non-alcoholic beer for Muslims and hoping that in however small a way it was bringing people together. Happily, none of the religious folk involved felt the slightest qualm about what they were doing. All part of God's work, Grimbergen's Fr Karel declared, a unifying force and a welcome opportunity for the Church to connect.

EXHIBITION

Mesmerising landscapes

Capturing the end of an era

JOANNA MOORHEAD

A Taste for Impressionism: Modern French Art from Millet to Matisse
NATIONAL GALLERIES SCOTLAND, EDINBURGH

THE AUTUMN streets are quieter in Edinburgh, now the frenzy of the first post-pandemic festival and the sombre pageantry of a monarch's death are done. But in the nation's foremost art gallery there remains one of the finest exhibitions in Britain right now: a jewel of a show that brings the warmth and sunshine of France to a city where the first chills of winter already lurk in the air.

A Taste for Impressionism (to 13 November) focuses on one of the most influential and significant of art movements: a new direction that began in the mid nineteenth century in a forest outside Paris, when a group of artists led by Jean-François Millet (1814-1875) set up their easels and began to paint the landscape using broad brushstrokes and bright, naturalistic colours. They captured a world of farms and fields, of shepherds and wood-gatherers; and they captured the end of an era, because industrialisation was changing the landscape forever.

A thousand kilometres north, Scotland was at the cutting edge of this industrialisation. Soon its shipyards would be the

NATIONAL GALLERIES OF SCOTLAND



Monet's Poplars on the Epte (detail), 1891

finest in the world, and its merchants would be among the richest people on the planet. But their love of enterprise was not limited to manufacturing; and that, combined with the frosty austerity in the air then as it is today, meant that when the ever-wealthier merchants turned their attention to art collecting, the combination of avant-garde and the sultry rural feel of the canvases made Impressionist works a shoo-in for the smart, high-ceilinged drawing rooms of Edinburgh's Morningside and Glasgow's West End.

Impressionism would go on to become one of the most loved and referenced art movements in history; and it is the debt it owes the burghers of these cities that is being celebrated in this exhibition. And of course, it explains why the Scottish National Galleries number such riches within its collection: for some years its annual budget for acquisitions was £1,000 (around £60,000 in today's money) which clearly didn't go far. But walk through the show today and be mesmerised by works like *Poplars on the Epte* by Monet (1891), reflecting the trees and the river so perfectly that it would be an entirely understandable mistake to hang them upside down. *Haystacks (Snow Effect)* (1891) is breathtaking in its depiction of the luminosity and shadows of a winter's day; it was one of more than 30 such paintings created in Giverny in an attempt to record the same subject at different times and in different seasons.

Another standout is Van Gogh's *Olive Trees* (1889), full of energy, dynamism and colour; the fact that it was painted in the asylum at St-Rémy is a reminder of the price he paid so we would have his art. Gauguin is well represented too: his *Vision After the Sermon* (1888) shows a group of Breton women watching the biblical scene in which Jacob wrestles with an angel. Pivotal in Gauguin's output artistically for the way it uses Japanese inspiration in the composition of the work, it also reveals the way faith was woven into the artist's own life. As for Cézanne, autumn visitors to the show will be rewarded by the chance to see his magnificent *The Big Trees* (1902-04) which, due to changed timings because of the pandemic, has only recently been added to the wall.

DANCE

In the end, love prevails

Tears, pride, remarkable cohesion and true commitment

FÁTIMA NOLLÉN

Giselle: United Ukrainian Ballet
COLISEUM, LONDON

EMOTIONS and meaning far beyond the dance infused the new London production of the romantic ballet *Giselle* by the newly formed United Ukrainian Ballet, for obvious reasons.

The opening night started with Benjamin Britten's version of the national anthem sung by the English National Opera chorus. The Ukrainian anthem that followed was sung by the cast with tears and pride since all the dancers were Ukrainian refugees living and working in the Netherlands.

Famous for his archaeological research to reconstruct original versions, Ukrainian choreographer (born in Russia) Alexei Ratmansky, worked on *Giselle* for the Bolshoi in 2019. He continued retouching it for this company and spent months in The Hague (invited by former Dutch dancer Igone de Jongh, director and founder of the project); and the production provides a lifeline to 50 dancers who fled Ukraine after 24 February, and aims to preserve and promote Ukrainian culture

PHOTO: MEDIANAUTS, HARRISON MAY



It was a tough performance to arrange: men needed presidential dispensation to leave the country, and many weren't fit to dance. And yet, despite the pressures and understandable personal anxieties, the ensemble delivered a solid performance with remarkable cohesion and true commitment. The Birmingham Royal Ballet lent costumes and sets from two productions (*Giselle* and *The Dream*), and the ENO orchestra, conducted by Ukrainian Viktor Oliynyk, sounded vibrant and played the faster tempi of the original score.

New music and choreography were added by Ratmansky, and mime gave clarity to the plot, for example, Giselle's mother's (Olena Mykhailova) eerie tale of the curse of the ghosts, which Giselle risks becoming. Some ensemble formations – circle, lines, crosses – looked new and pretty, and though some nerves were evident in the *pas des paysans* the grape harvest scene was full of joy.

The wonderful American Ballet principal Christine Shevchenko made a flirty Giselle, the peasant in love with Albrecht, a nobleman in disguise who is really engaged to Bathilde. When Hilarion, the gamekeeper and Giselle's suitor, unveils the deceit, our heroine goes mad and dies. She enters the afterworld of the Wilis, a ghostly group of dead brides who seek revenge against men at night.

Shevchenko's performance was refined, with long lines, perfectly finished pirouettes, gracious arms and great acting in the madness scene. Partnered by a svelte and dramatic Oleksii Tiutiunnyk, gifted with high jumps, they made a believable couple throughout.

The well achieved second act, where the phantasmagorical spectres drive Hilarion to death, showed a confident Myrtha (Elizaveta Gogidze), Queen of the Wilis, pushing a reluctant Giselle to make Albrecht dance until death. The characteristic *pas de deux* was done with moving abandonment. In the end, love prevails and Albrecht is saved.

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·OUR REVIEWERS·

BRUCE CLARK is an author, journalist and lecturer · **NICHOLAS KING SJ**'s translation of the Bible was published in 2013

MICHAEL GLOVER is a poet and critic · **JULIAN MARGARET GIBBS** is a freelance writer

Racing through the snow

A concise history of Russia is pithy and skilled

BRUCE CLARK

The Story of Russia
ORLANDO FIGES
(BLOOMSBURY, 368 PP, £25)

TABLET BOOKSHOP PRICE £22.50 • TEL 020 7799 4064

ACCORDING TO an old Soviet joke, "the future is always certain, but the past is unpredictable". In other words, our masters, as devout Marxists, continually reassure us that paradise lies ahead, and that monotonous utopianism can never change. So when there is a policy shift, it is often cloaked in new assessments of the recent or distant past. By following those discussions of the past, one can sometimes guess the authorities' next move.

As a cultural historian of Russia, Orlando Figes knows this well. He has written with distinction on the ways in which the country's elites – after the Revolution and long before it – manipulated the swirling currents of national identity, affirming or downplaying connections with the West. Much of his work has been full of fine-grained detail, but this latest offering is sweeping and concise. Like a troika racing through the snow, it aims, in 300-odd pages, to chart not only Russian history but Russian historiography: the perpetually shifting images and metaphors through which Russians imagined, or were told to imagine, their origins.

It is a skilled piece of compression.

THE ACCOUNT begins with the Primary Chronicles, penned by monks in Kyiv in the twelfth century. They describe how, some 300 years earlier, quarrelsome Slavic tribes invited three princely brothers from the people known as Rus to establish order. Then, in 988, a member of that dynasty converted his subjects to a faith whose glorious ceremonies had been observed in Constantinople; and the era of Christianity among the eastern Slavs began.

As Figes shows, the significance of that story is contested in the twenty-first century. Especially since the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russian leaders, secular and spiritual, have used the "common baptismal font" in which those proto-Slavs were dipped as an argument for the unity of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. For them, any attempt to assert the existence of a clearly separate Ukrainian nation is an act of sacrilege against the baptiser-prince they call Vladimir.

PHOTO: ALAMY/REUTERS, ANTON VAGANOV



Incarcerated: Russian historian Yuri Dmitriev

Patriotic Ukrainians, who call him Volodomyr, have a different perspective: they see their own nation as the main moral legatee of a monarch who, by adopting Christianity, made "not only a cultural and political decision, but a European choice" – to quote the country's ex-president Petro Poroshenko. Yet another reading has been made by Metropolitan Onufry who heads the large Orthodox community in Ukraine that remained broadly loyal to Moscow until the invasion, but severed virtually all its Muscovite ties in May. He accepts the "common font" of the eastern Slavs but now says that Russia's onslaught is a violation of that commonality.

Down the centuries, as Figes observes, there have been two especially contentious points in the Russians' search for self-understanding. One concerns the origins of the Rus dynasty. Were they Scandinavian (as the Chronicles assert) or Slavic? Stalin's version of Russian patriotism abhorred the idea that that nation's first sovereigns had been aliens; historians who argued back were persecuted.

The other apple of discord is the significance of the so-called Tatar-Mongol yoke, under which the eastern Slavs laboured, roughly between the destruction of Kyiv by nomadic warriors in 1240 and the battle of Kulikovo in 1480. Here, the question is whether the Mongol overlords did nothing but harm to their subjects, or instead bequeathed certain benefits, including administrative and military prowess. This argument is very topical.

THE MONGOL-FRIENDLY views of the odd Russian thinker Lev Gumilyov have influenced today's Muscovite elite, including Vladimir Putin. In 2016, Russia's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, offered his own broad sweep of national history, acknowledging two legitimate views of the medieval era. One was expressed by Pushkin: by acting as a buffer against the Mongols, Russia had protected "Christian enlightenment" for an ungrateful Europe. The alternative view, promulgated by Gumilyov was that the Mongol invasion had positively stimulated the emergence of a new Russian *ethnos*. In a way, both views can support the same conclusion: whether through commonality with Europe or because of its radical difference, Russia has a right to deal with its chronically hostile Western neighbours on its own terms. As Figes notes, the theories of Gumilyov also provide Lavrov with a way of explaining pragmatically warm relations with China.

But as Orlando Figes also makes clear, the most troubling features of present-day Russian historiography concern not the medieval past but events that are within or just beyond living memory.

Well before the ideological straitjacket that was imposed after the invasion of Ukraine, Stalin himself was being progressively rehabilitated, along with the calculus he epitomised: tyranny, including mass murder, is a tolerable price to pay for a strong state.

Creditably, the book describes the appalling case of Yuri Dmitriev, an historian who exposed mass killings in his native Karelia in 1937, and who faces virtually indefinite incarceration. Last December, his jail term was extended from 13 to 15 years. The following day, the organisation of historical truth-tellers for which he worked, Memorial, was liquidated. One did not need to be a skilled interpreter of Russian attitudes to history to sense that something very dark was brewing – and it would be manifest in rockets as well as textbooks.

Biting your ankle

NICHOLAS KING SJ

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, Catholic Edition
(CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1,280 PP, £70)
TABLET BOOKSHOP PRICE £63 • TEL 020 7799 4064

HOW DO YOU review a Bible translation? It used to be very easy: all you had to do was go to your favourite most difficult or most revealing passage, and see what the translators have done with it, and then launch into praise or blame. At one stage of my life it was mindless literalism that was the enemy, while at another I would check any passage in Scripture that functioned as a shibboleth for whatever ideology I was currently embracing. Long experience, however, has taught me that things are not quite as simple as that: there are many translations that have made me sigh and roll my eyes in places, but that have revealed something that hit home as "really rather good".

This edition of the *English Standard Version* (ESV) was first published, as an offshoot of the *Revised Standard Version*, by Crossway in the United States, and has been scrutinised from the vantage point of "Catholic Orthodoxy" by "a team of Catholic Bible Scholars". It would be interesting to see a list of the changes that have been made in accordance with this criterion. The original Preface to the ESV states that "each word and phrase in the ESV has been carefully weighed against the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, to ensure the fullest accuracy and clarity and to avoid under-translating or overlooking any nuance of the original text". This is an admirable aim, but as it stands it is probably rather too strong a claim, one that is too easily refuted. Similarly, to translate *Christos* as "Christ", as this version does, may not always succeed in what it seeks to achieve; and I am not convinced about the translation of *doulos/ebed* as "servant" rather than "slave", though I quite like the rendering of *idou/hinneh* as "behold", since it captures well the tone of the original, and is very much part of the way that Bible discourse works. There are translations (tell it not in Gath) that omit this terminology, presumably on the grounds that "behold" wastes ink in the printers.

PHOTO: ALAMY/PA



Tyndale's 1526 New Testament translation

THERE ARE one or two other points that we might make. First, those who have produced this version set a good deal of store by *Liturgiam Authenticam*, which is, to be honest, pretty tedious, and somewhat ideological reading.

Secondly, it is probably too late to enter a plea for some of the offspring of the *Jerusalem Bible*, which has become so important a part of our liturgical experience over the last half-century; there is a good deal to be said for the *Revised New Jerusalem Bible*, translated by the indefatigable Dom Henry Wansbrough.

Thirdly, many observers have expressed some dismay about the process by which the English and Welsh bishops, but not their Scottish or Irish peers, have adopted this translation; it all seemed a bit over-discreet; and there were hints that one argument was that using the ESV might be a cheaper way of approaching the matter. It might have made sense to contact English-speaking biblical scholars in other cultures for their views.

Fourthly, the *sound* of any biblical translation is of immense importance, given that it is to be used in the liturgy. The admirable and excellent scholars who made up the panels that produced the *King James Version*, to check that it would work when heard in church, always read to each other the passage they had been working on, but there is no sign in this version of any sensitivity to the question of what it all sounds like.

Fifthly, it seems quite important in these days, when many readers will come fresh to the biblical texts, to have good notes, to give a hint of the kind of scholarly debate that is going on, and the richness of the meaning of biblical terms. An excellent example of this is *The New American Bible*, and its admirable offspring, *The African Bible*.

Sixthly, there is the excellent example of the *New Revised Standard Version*; it is not perfect, of course (no translation ever is), but it has a good deal to be said for it, not least its attempt to avoid exclusive language, which in these days can feel like a bald statement that the Bible has nothing to say to half the human race. The ESV has made a nod in this direction, but without much evident enthusiasm.

In the end, perhaps, history will reveal what is best. I have always urged my students to use more than one version, when they are working on Scripture, to make sure that they capture the riches of particular *pericopae*. The Scriptures are in an important sense God's Word, and have that indispensable divine capacity of biting your ankle and bringing you up short. The Bible matters, you see, and the *English Standard Version* may well turn out to have this quality.

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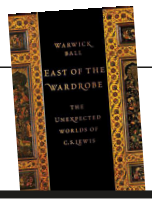


RECENTLY PUBLISHED **East of the Wardrobe** / WARWICK BALL / OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, £20; TABLET PRICE £18 / An archaeologist and historian explores hitherto unrecognised and unexpected Eastern aspects in C.S. Lewis' Narnia books

PHOTO: ALAMY/CNP/ABACA, RON SACHS

Austere beauty

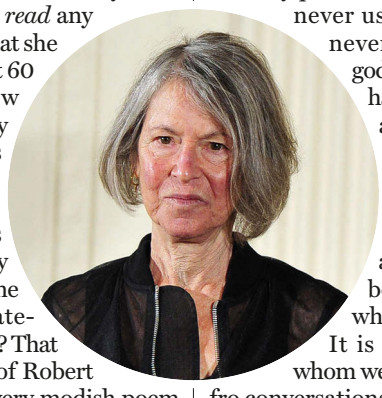
MICHAEL GLOVER

Poems 1962–2020
LOUISE GLÜCK
(PENGUIN CLASSICS, 720 PP, £12.99)

TABLET BOOKSHOP PRICE £11.69 • TEL 020 7799 4064

WHERE EXACTLY does Louise Glück (pictured) fit in among the great American versifiers? Does she link arms with Walt Whitman, that bearded windbag, or with Emily Dickinson, the minute pietist? With Ezra Pound the obscurantist, or with Anne Sexton and Robert Lowell, those self-lacerators? Does she "Howl" along with Ginsberg? Is she an oh-just-look-at-me-me-me kind of American poet? Or does she look out towards the world with a degree of cerebral sobriety?

You do need to ask those kind of questions of this American woman who lives in New England, and scooped the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2020, because, frankly, how many of you have actually *read* any of the 12 books of poetry that she has published over the past 60 years, and which are now gathered together by Penguin Modern Classics in a single hefty volume?



The first book of her 12 came out in the late 1960s when confessional anxiety among the poets was all the rage. Remember this statement: "My mind's not right"? That was at the wobbly centre of Robert Lowell's "Skunk Hour", a very modish poem of its time. And much American poetry of this era gave off the same kind of powerful odour, including the very first book by a young poet called Louise Glück, *Firstborn* (1968). This was a very edgy, anxious and even rather self-regarding debut, but her writing soon changed, and all her later books possess a kind of calmness and simplicity of address which makes her very pleasurably readable as a poet. She never uses dictionary words. She never bamboozles. The Greek gods are often present, but they have inveigled themselves into a world we seem to hold in common. They do not invite us to try to remember quite what they signify.

Perhaps her most appealing and approachable book of all is *A Village Life*, which she published in 2009. It is full of local people with whom we can have agreeable to-and-fro conversations, a *Spoon River Anthology* for our day, but it is also much broader than that. The Nobel Prize Committee justly speaks of her "unmistakable poetic voice that with austere beauty makes individual existence universal".

Thinking aloud

Julian Margaret Gibbs is enchanted by audiobooks

DULCIE MAINWARING, protagonist of Barbara Pym's 1961 novel **No Fond Return of Love** (£17.49), is ironic, observant, single, gentle. She lives alone in the suburban family home, works on academic indexes, goes to church, bottles fruit. Attendance at a comically dreary conference leads to new encounters with Viola Dace, a woman with a bolder style (black dress, untidy hair), and handsome academic Aylwin Forbes. But Aylwin is silly and vain; his marriage to a much younger woman having failed, he nurtures a passion for Dulcie's teenage niece. Self-centred Viola, grumpy and fearful of spinsterhood, settles for marriage to an unglamorous knitwear buyer. Pym's settings convey the bleakness of post-war Britain superbly: the comfortless girls' boarding school where the conference is held, the dismal seaside resort where Dulcie and Viola pursue Aylwin and his equally good-looking vicar brother. Other characters are delightfully idiosyncratic: Aylwin's strong-minded, West Country mother, for example, with her pithy put-downs to her foolish sons. But though Pym's portrayal of female middle-class life is funny and sharp, it is also sad. This new recording, read with delicacy and aplomb, if somewhat jerkily, by Jane McDowell, catches the spirit of one of Pym's best novels.



Free Love (£22.74), Tessa Hadley's most recent novel, is set six years after Pym's was published and is a fascinating reflection on the next historical moment for women. Phyllis is a glamorous suburban housewife, solidly married to Roger who has a brilliant Foreign Office career. The life she escapes when she falls for Nicky, bohemian son of one of Roger's old friends, is more prosperous and tranquil than Dulcie Mainwaring's, yet similarly unfulfilled. The big difference is that she has children: cross, lumpy Colette, full of academic promise, and beautiful little Hugh whom she'll soon have to lose to boarding school. The damage to these two individuals when their parents' marriage falls apart is brilliantly drawn. Yet Hadley's genius is to keep her truths and counter-truths spinning in the air. The bohemia Phyllis flees to is rich with new ideas if also brutal in its treatment of women and she is courageous in holding on to its revelations. Roger, too inhibited by the conventions of his era to reach out to his hurt children, possesses a loyalty and deep discernment that have their roots in the civilisation Nicky aims to overthrow. Unexpected developments lead to a subtle ending. I loved Abigail Thaw's voice reading this novel: as warm and nuanced as Hadley's own prose.

In another fresh recording of a twentieth-century novel, Alex Jennings reads Graham Swift's **Waterland** (£12.59), published in 1983. Jennings' voice, dry, ironic, thoughtful, is perfect for Tom, the disappointed, middle-aged ex-teacher who is looking back on his boyhood in the Fens. Tom describes wartime, his mother's death, his lock-keeper father's struggles to manage his sons, the older of whom has severe learning difficulties (labelled much more brutally in the language of the time). The discovery of a drowned body sets off events that lead to tragedy. Swift's powerful sense of time and history is most striking in his descriptions of the Fens. Reclaimed from the sea, requiring constant labour to keep them drained and their waterways silt-free, they become a metaphor for dogged, heroic, possibly doomed human civilisation. This metaphor is especially potent 40 years later, now we all know that the seas are rising fast.

PHOTO: ALAMY, STEVEN MAY


Tessa Hadley

Available to Audible (Amazon) subscribers at £7.99 per month.

NEWS BRIEFING

THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD

Havana expels top Jesuit

The **Cuban** government has expelled the country's Jesuit superior. "On the morning of 13 September Fr David Pantaleón, superior of the Jesuits in Cuba, left the island because his residency permit was not renewed," said a statement from the Jesuits of Latin America. It highlighted that the priest, from the Dominican Republic, was also president of the Cuban Conference of Religious Men and Women which, like the Jesuits, has defended human rights and has accompanied prisoners and their families.

Bishop Joseba Segura Etxezarraga of Bilbao, **Spain** announced last week that Pope Francis has ordered a new canonical process for investigating an abuse allegation at the Opus Dei Gaztelueta school in Bizkaia. It involves José María Martínez Sanz, a numerary member of Opus Dei and a lay teacher. The ecclesiastical court will be overseen by a bishop and other senior Church personnel. The complaints of abuse date to 2009 and 2011, and Martínez was convicted by a secular court. He and the Prelature of Opus Dei have rejected the abuse allegations. The minor involved wrote to the Pope asking him to reopen the case and received a handwritten letter, saying the court was being appointed.

The provincial government in the southern Indian state of **Karnataka** has approved a law criminalising religious conversions. The state's Legislative Council passed the contentious Karnataka Right to Freedom of Religion Bill on 15 September. Archbishop Peter Machado of Bangalore, who heads the regional bishops' forum, called the law "irrelevant and malicious" and "aimed at dividing the Christians from other religious minorities". Freedom of religion is a constitutional right in India.

The European Parliament has condemned repression of the Catholic Church in **Nicaragua**. A resolution, passed on 15 September, criticised the "arbitrary arrest" of Bishop Rolando Álvarez of Matagalpa and called "for his and others' immediate and unconditional release and the annulment of all legal proceedings against them." The text also highlighted the expulsion earlier this year of the Polish apostolic nuncio, Archbishop Waldemar Stanislaw Sommertag.

PHOTO: ALAMY/ZUMA/SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST, JONATHAN WONG



An opera star from **Hong Kong** has publicly apologised for praising Britain's Queen Elizabeth II following her death. Law Kar-ying (pictured) posted a selfie on Instagram while queuing to pay tribute to Queen Elizabeth at the British consulate in Hong Kong with the caption: "Hong Kong was a blessed land during her reign." The post outraged nationalists. Law then posted a video apology in which he expressed regret for "making remarks of mourning without thinking them through".

Damage caused by heavy rain in August and September in the west of **Sierra Leone** has led the Director of Caritas Freetown to appeal to communities to protect their environment and avoid irresponsible waste. "We continue to appeal to all to preserve the environment, plant trees and stop irresponsibly littering," said Fr Peter Konteh. He was assessing damage to a school run by Caritas Freetown to help girls from vulnerable families. Litter prevented rainwater from draining away, and the water carried debris, including heavy rocks, that damaged the school building.

An increase in water-borne diseases following floods that have killed 1,500 people in **Pakistan** has prompted bishops to call for more emergency assistance. The bishops of the three dioceses most affected by recent deadly monsoon flooding appealed for more funding for emergency food, to repair damaged homes and to provide medical supplies. Bishop Samson Shukardin of Hyderabad in Sindh said the money would be used to drain flooded land and buy medicines to fight the rise in malaria, dengue and cholera.

Court calls in former president

A court has summoned former **Sri Lankan** President Maithripala Sirisena on suspicion of involvement in the 2019 Easter massacres, three of which were in churches. The Magistrate's Court in Colombo directed him to appear in court on 14 October, in response to a private complaint filed by Fr Cyril Gamini Fernando, a member of the National Catholic Committee for Justice for Easter Sunday Attack Victims, and Jesuraj Ganeshan, who lost a leg in the blast at a church. The attacks killed 280 people and injured hundreds.

The Diocese of Marbel in the southern **Philippines** and Catholic social action groups are celebrating last week's decision by the local authorities in South Cotabato, Mindanao, to revoke the mining permits of the controversial Tampakan gold and copper quarry. Bishop Cerilo Casicas of Marbel has long called for public vigilance "against open-pit mining methods in South Cotabato". It was feared that the huge mine would displace some 4,000 indigenous people as well as pollute rivers and destroy forest and farmland. Meanwhile, Catholic clergy have joined protest rallies ahead of the 50th anniversary of the declaration of martial law in the country on 21 September 1972.

PHOTO: ADORERS OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST



A Catholic women's religious order in **Pennsylvania** argued on 15 September in a federal appellate court that a private oil company violated the sisters' religious liberty rights when it seized their farmland to build a natural gas pipeline in 2018. "Every day since October 2018, as fossil fuel gas flows through our farmland in Lancaster County, so also flows Transco's blatant disregard and trampling of the Adorers' religious beliefs," Adorers of the Blood of Christ Sister Dani Brought (pictured) said outside a federal courthouse in Philadelphia. Citing the Natural Gas Act, the US Federal Energy Regulatory Commission authorised pipeline company Williams/Transco to seize a cornfield the sisters owned that was in the pipeline's pathway.

The **Vatican** is to hold a competition to choose an original musical composition for the official hymn of the Catholic Church's 2025 Jubilee Year. The Vatican's Dicastery for Evangelisation has invited entrants to set to music a provided text which expresses the essence of the Jubilee occasion. Compositions must be original and unpublished. The hymn should have a liturgical purpose and be capable of being sung by a Church congregation and by a schola cantorum. The entry deadline is 25 March 2023. Application forms from www.iubilaeum2025.va/en/inno.html in January 2023.

Compiled by **James Roberts** and **Ellen Teague**.



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PHOTO: CNS, PAUL HARING



NEWS

·QUOTE OF THE WEEK·

“The degrading disrespect with which immigrants are treated in this country – like pawns in games of political showmanship – is a disgrace.”

Bishop Daniel Flores, of Brownsville, Texas, reacts to the flying of immigrants from ‘red’ to ‘blue’ states in the US (see page 26).

KAZAKHSTAN / Francis identifies where politics and the transcendent rightly meet

‘All true religions must commit to world peace’

PHOTO: CNS, PAUL HARING



Pope Francis addresses the Congress of Religions in Nur-Sultan’s Palace of Independence

JAMES ROBERTS

ON 15 SEPTEMBER at the Seventh Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in the Kazakh capital, Nur-Sultan, Pope Francis used his address to the 100 delegations from 60 countries to make a profound and impassioned plea for world peace.

Acknowledging, without naming Ukraine, that he was speaking against a background of “the utter folly of war”, he told the attendees that the motto for his visit, “Messengers of Unity and Peace”, was in the plural because “all of us are on a common journey”.

It was providential, he said, that the congress was coming together “to reaffirm the authentic and inalienable essence of religion”.

“Extremism, radicalism, terrorism and all other incentives to hatred, hostility, violence and war … have nothing to do with the authentic spirit of religion and must be rejected in the most decisive terms possible,” he said, reiterating the words of the Seventh Congress Declaration.

He then explored the relationship between politics and religion, using the symbolism of the Kazakh flag. “If the golden eagle displayed on that flag speaks of earthly authority and ancient empires, the blue background evokes the colour of the sky and thus transcendence,” he said.

These spheres were “distinct but not …separate”. There must be “a free space open to the infinite and not straitened by earthly power”, while transcendence “must not yield to the temptation to turn into power, lest Heaven fall to earth, the eternal ‘beyond’ be chained to an earthly present, and love of neighbour become prey to partisan decisions”.

In a subtle exposition of the manner in which politics and religion must properly interact, he said: “‘No’, then, to confusion between politics and transcendence, but ‘no’ also to their separation, for the highest human aspirations cannot be excluded from public life and relegated solely to the private sphere.”

Defending the universal right to religious freedom, he used lyrical imagery from the Kazakh national anthem, describing Kazakhstan as “a sky of golden sun”. The same is true of each human being, he said. “In their absolute uniqueness, if they are in contact with the divine, every man and woman can radiate a special light in our world.”

The Pope explained how the overall good of humanity should be considered ahead of “strategic and economic objectives, national, energy and military interests and in advance of crucial decisions”. Making truly great decisions, he said, means looking to “children, to young people and their future, to the elderly and their wisdom, to ordinary people and their genuine needs”. Individuals cannot be “reduced” to what they produce and earn, he pointed out. And the family is the protector of this truth: “The family, a word that in Kazakh means ‘nest of soul and love’, is the natural, irreplaceable reality that must be protected and promoted so that tomorrow’s men and women grow and mature.”

He concluded by referencing three key words. “Peace”, the Pope said, was the goal of the congress and of humanity itself. “Peace! Beybitsilik, mir, peace!” he exclaimed. “Beybitsilik” translates as “peace” in Kazakh; “mir” means “peace” in both Russian and Ukrainian. His second word was “women” because “women bestow care and life upon the world”.

“How many calamitous decisions might have been avoided had women been directly involved in decision-making!” he said. Thirdly, he referred to young people: “They more than anyone else, call for peace and respect for the common home of Creation.”

Pope advocates patience and dialogue with China’s rulers

ON THE RETURN flight to Rome from Kazakhstan, Pope Francis was asked about religious freedom in the context of the trial in Hong Kong of Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun that was to have begun on Monday 19 September, *writes James Roberts*. The cardinal was set to stand trial along with three other trustees of a humanitarian fund that provided financial and legal aid to Hong Kongers arrested during the 2019 demonstrations against a bill to allow political detainees in Hong Kong to be sent to the mainland for trial. The start of Zen’s trial was delayed on Monday, reportedly after a judge in the case tested positive for coronavirus.

“Having spoken about the importance of religious freedom at the Kazakhstan congress,” a reporter asked Pope Francis, “do you consider the trial against Cardinal Zen a violation of religious freedom?”

The Pope replied: “To understand China takes a century, and we do not live for a century. The Chinese mentality is a rich mentality, and when it gets a little sick, it loses its richness; it is capable of making mistakes. In order to understand, we have chosen the path of dialogue, open to dialogue.”

Referring to the Sino-Vatican deal, primarily on the appointment of bishops, which is due for renewal this autumn, Francis went on: “There is a bilateral Vatican-Chinese commission that is going well, slowly, because the Chinese pace is slow, they have an eternity to go forward: they are a people of endless patience … It is not easy to understand the Chinese mentality, but it should be respected, I always respect this. And here in the Vatican, there is a dialogue commission that is going well, chaired by Cardinal [Pietro] Parolin and he is the person right now who knows the most about China and dialogue with the Chinese.

“Qualifying China as ‘undemocratic’, I do not identify with that, because it’s such a complex country … yes, it is true that there are things that seem undemocratic to us. Cardinal Zen is going to trial these days, I think. And he says what he feels … I try to support the path of dialogue.”

Asked: “What about [Chinese President] Xi Jinping?”, who was in Kazakhstan at the same time as Francis, the Pope replied: “He had a state visit there, but I did not see him.”

GERMANY / Treatment of dissenting bishops 'one-sided and unfair'

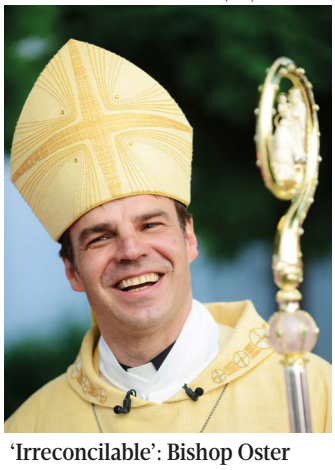
Divisions over conduct of synodal plenary

CHRISTA PONGRATZ-LIPPITT

WHILE A majority (92.8 per cent) of German bishops are in favour of establishing a nationwide permanent "synodal commission" – an advisory body where the bishops and the laity can together continue to discuss further steps of Church reform – the manner in which the 8-10 September fourth plenary of the "Synodal Way" was conducted has come in for sharp criticism.

Bishop Stefan Oster of Passau told the *Passauer Bistumsblatt* on 16 September he would continue to seek consensus, but it was difficult to imagine that the bishops would find a common way forward. On certain issues that were being discussed in the "Synodal Way", the bishops were "more or less irreconcilable". The fourth synodal way plenary had been "more about political processes, tactics and a search for alliances than about listening to one another," he said.

PHOTO: CNS/KNA, HARALD OPPITZ



'Irreconcilable': Bishop Oster

Bishop Franz Josef Overbeck of Essen also declared reservations about the process. "With the rejection of the fundamental text on sexual morality (which includes reforming the Church's teaching on birth control, homosexuality and sexual identity) yet more trust in the German bishops has been lost," he said in a statement published by his diocese. Many Catholics now doubted whether the Church really wanted to change, Overbeck said.

Steffen Zimmermann, Berlin editor of the bishops' conference's official website, katholisch.de who attended the synodal way plenary as an observer, was sharply critical in a different way. "Of course one can find the bishops' 'No' to the text on sexual morality annoying, but the overreaction of the group in favour of reform had little to do with synodal or democratic principles. I found the reactions to the bishops' rejection of the text very one-sided and unfair," he said. "The way these bishops were treated did not do credit to the Church reform procedure or to the culture of the discussions at the plenary." Some delegates burst into tears and stormed out after that vote failed to carry.

Bishop Bertram Meier of Augsburg admitted in a press statement that he had found the plenary "cantankerous", but at least "we remained together and didn't go our separate ways", he said. The German suggestions would flow into the 2023 worldwide Synodal Process, he stated, where they would – if need be – be corrected, Meier added.

Bishop Rudolf Voderholzer of Regensburg was less sanguine. "Synodality must be based on the Church's Magisterium and not on an ever-changing subject of consultation," Voderholzer told the *Tagespost*.

In the press conference on his return flight from Kazakhstan, Pope Francis was asked how worried he was by the "severe losses of believers" in Churches in Europe, in particular in Germany.

"What you have to do, first of all, is to be consistent with your faith," Francis replied. "If you are a bishop or a priest who is not consistent, young people catch a whiff – and then goodbye! When a Church ... thinks more about money, development, pastoral plans and not pastoral care, that doesn't attract people."

Bishops 'disconcerted' by DeSantis ploy on migrant transfers

UNITED STATES. The Catholic bishops of Florida and other church leaders in the United States spoke out in defence of migrants following reports that Florida Governor Ron DeSantis arranged for a group of 50 undocumented migrants from Venezuela to be flown from San Antonio, Texas, to exclusive Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, on 14 September, *writes Brian Fraga*.

The Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops described the reports as "disconcerting" and added that "any action to transport persons under false pretences and leave them stranded with no assistance would be to diminish their human dignity and objectify them." Bishop Daniel Flores of Brownsville, Texas, tweeted on 16 September that "the degrading disrespect with which immigrants are treated in this country – like pawns in games of political showmanship – is a disgrace."

A spokesperson for DeSantis, a Republican, said flying the migrants to Martha's Vineyard was part of Florida's "relocation programme to transport illegal immigrants to sanctuary destinations". Republican governors in Texas and Arizona have also transported undocumented migrants by bus to cities in Democratic-led states.

■ Three Catholic schools in Denver, Colorado, are in a heated row after one of the schools reportedly criticised the other two for holding positions at odds with Catholic teaching on homosexuality.

The *Denver Post* reported that St Thomas More Catholic primary school wrote a letter to families in mid-September informing them that Regis Jesuit High School and St Mary's Academy would not be invited to a recruitment event at St Thomas More. The letter reportedly accused the other schools of "explicitly endors(ing) positions on same-sex attraction and gender inconsistent with Church teachings". Leaders at St Mary's and Regis rejected the claims.

France will not extradite priest to Canada

FRANCE CANNOT extradite a former missionary accused of sexual abuse despite pleas from an Inuit delegation to send the now 92-year-old Fr Johannes Rivoire back to Canada, *writes Tom Heneghan*. "In accordance with its constitutional tradition, France does not extradite its nationals," Justice Minister Éric Dupond-Moretti told them.

The accusations of abuse of at least three minors in Nunavut Territory, dating back to over 50 years ago, are beyond France's statute of limitations. Canada has issued an arrest warrant for Fr Rivoire and requested his extradition.

His order, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, has ordered him to comply but he refused. Fr Rivoire maintained his denial of the alleged abuse when he met the five-person delegation in Lyon, where he lives in a retirement home.



BRAZIL

Bishops meet election candidates

MEMBERS OF the Brazilian Bishops' Conference met candidates for the country's elections on 2 October, *writes Ellen Teague*. They presented their contribution towards constructing a fairer and more united country while stressing the non-partisan position of the Church. Themes addressed include care for the environment, social exclusion and poverty. The first meeting, between Archbishop Walmor Oliveira de Azevedo of Belo Horizonte and Vice-Presidential candidate Geraldo Alckmin, took place on 13 September.

Voters will elect a President and Vice-President, renew the Chamber and the Senate and elect 27 state governors. The electoral campaign, which has been polarised, is mainly centred on the election of the new President. Among the 12 candidates, the main contenders are the incumbent right-wing President, Jair Bolsonaro, and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, a leader of the left who was president from 2003 to 2011.

The bishops urged Brazilians to choose candidates who were "committed to the integral defence of life, in all its stages, without forgetting human and social rights".

UNITED STATES

Push to recognise foetus as a person

ANTI-ABORTION activists in Rhode Island are asking the US Supreme Court to take up the issue of foetal personhood just a few months after the Court overturned its nearly 50-year Roe v Wade precedent that established a constitutional right to abortion, *writes Brian Fraga*.

On 13 September, the group Catholics for Life filed a 46-page petition asking the court to "clarify whether an unborn human being has standing to access the courts".

In 2019, Catholics for Life and other plaintiffs filed a lawsuit arguing that a state law passed that year that codified abortion rights under Roe violated their rights as citizens of Rhode Island. Two of the plaintiffs were unborn children, one early in the pregnancy, the other late and viable. A Rhode Island judge in November 2019 dismissed Catholics for Life's complaint.

VIEW FROM ROME



Christopher Lamb

THE VATICAN department that handles Catholic social teaching has undergone a re-launch. The Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development deals with issues close to the Pope's heart, such as advocacy for migrants and ending the death penalty. When the Covid-19 pandemic hit, Francis asked this department to lead the Holy See's response.

But it hasn't all been plain sailing for the department, formed five years ago from a merger of four "pontifical councils" created after the Second Vatican Council. Bringing them together caused tensions, and in the summer of 2021 the Pope ordered an internal review of the entire operation. Several months later, Cardinal Peter Turkson, the first prefect of the department, was removed from his post as his five-year term expired.

Last week, the dicastery announced it had been "reconfigured and newly missioned" following Francis' new constitution for the Roman Curia, *Praedicate Evangelium*, and a "thorough re-evaluation" of its work. It declared its way of working will be to "listen, dialogue and reflect in a synodal manner" and it will be "most attentive to the concerns expressed by local Churches and the requests they make". This is the clearest example to date of a Vatican office setting out how it will follow the spirit and letter of Francis' reforms.

The dicastery is led by Cardinal Michael Czerny, a Czechoslovakian-born Canadian Jesuit and a trusted collaborator of Francis who has worked in Central America and Africa, and Sr Alessandra Smerilli, a Salesian sister and economist. She is an architect of the "Economy of Francesco", a gathering of young entrepreneurs and business people in Assisi, which the Pope is due to attend today.

Several days after announcing the relaunch of his office, the cardinal was in Chicago to deliver the Cardinal Joseph Bernardin Lecture at the Catholic Theological Union. In a speech built on Cardinal Bernardin's "consistent ethic of life", Czerny argued that the number of deaths caused by poverty and unjust economic systems is a pro-life issue. He sees opposition to abortion and the death penalty as part of a "seamless garment" that links together abortion and euthanasia with issues such as climate change, nuclear disarmament, and social justice. The phrase was first coined by the journalist and activist Eileen Egan in 1971. Czerny said it was not enough to "simply oppose abortion and euthanasia" and argued that "a consistent ethic of life is also a consistent ethic of solidarity".

His remarks are significant, given that it is widely rumoured in Rome that Francis is preparing an encyclical on life issues, which may be given the title *Gaudium Vitae* ("The Joy of Life"). It would cover contraception, assisted procreation and palliative care, among other hotly contested issues. Cardinal Czerny's Chicago speech, and the leadership of his department, give us some clues as to how the issues will likely be framed. Watch this space.

AT THE END of June, Pope Francis received a group of UK and Irish abuse survivors in the Vatican's apostolic palace. As he listened to their stories he was "visibly shaken and upset". He offered an apology to the men. The eight survivors who met the Pope have been involved in a years-long struggle to have their suffering recognised by the Comboni missionaries, the religious order that ran a junior seminary in Mirfield, West Yorkshire, which they all attended in the 1960s and 1970s and where they were abused by priests. Until last week, the Combonis had refused to meet the group without lawyers being present.

During their papal audience, Francis promised personally to ring the leader of the Comboni order and to ask him to finally agree to meet the group. On 13 September, Fr Tesfaye Tadesse, the Comboni superior general, met the men in Archbishop's House, Westminster. He released a statement offering a "heartfelt apology" to those who had "suffered abuse" and joined with Francis in asking forgiveness. The survivors said they were "deeply moved" by the meeting and the healing process has been taken "one step further".

SOME IN the Church remain determined to try and pin the charge of heresy on the Pope. During his recent visit to Kazakhstan, one of those who helped push his wheelchair was Bishop Athanasius Schneider, a German-Russian who was raised in the Catholic underground.

Now an auxiliary of Astana, and one of Francis' fiercest critics, Schneider said the Pope's involvement in the event suggested he believed in "a supermarket of religions" rather than in the "one true religion", which is the Catholic Church. Francis, who warned against syncretism while in Kazakhstan, responded to the criticism on the flight back to Rome saying: "I don't give up my faith if I speak to another's faith. On the contrary. I honour my faith because another listens to it, and I listen to theirs." Bishop Schneider insisted his criticism had been offered in a spirit of "brotherly love". A few days later, a small group of clergy and scholars released a statement claiming that the Pope's recent apostolic letter on the liturgy, *Desiderio Desideravi*, contradicts the teaching of the Council of Trent on the worthy reception of the Eucharist. Bishop Schneider was one of the signatories.

NEWS BRIEFING

FROM BRITAIN AND IRELAND

PHOTO: CNS/REUTERS, TOBY MELVILLE



Catholics pray for late Queen

King Charles III (pictured after the state funeral for his mother, Queen Elizabeth II) spoke out about his determination to "protect the diversity of our country" at a reception at Buckingham Palace where the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, was among those present. Afterwards, the cardinal said: "In my conversation with him, I assured him that Catholics had continued in heartfelt prayer for his mother."

The **BBC** has apologised after receiving 269 complaints about "disrespectful" commentary concerning Catholics being "cleared out of Scotland" during live coverage of the journey of the royal hearse from Balmoral to Edinburgh on Monday.

The Diocese of **Westminster**'s Justice and Peace Commission and the London Catholic Worker postponed this week's prayer vigil outside the Home Office, after it coincided with the Queen's state funeral. The next vigil will be on Monday.

Cardinal Nichols delivered the homily at the divine liturgy at London's **Ukrainian** Catholic Cathedral of the Holy Family on Wednesday last week, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The Catholic Church across Europe marked the feast, which is particularly celebrated by the Eastern Church, with prayers for peace in Ukraine.

At her funeral on Thursday last week, nine-year-old Olivia Pratt-Korbel was described by **Archbishop of Liverpool** Malcolm McMahon OP as "like all children ... a beautiful work of art loved into being by God". Pupils from her school were among those attending the funeral Mass, at St Margaret Mary's Church in Knotty Ash.

Marking tomorrow's World Day of **Migrants and Refugees**, Bishop Paul McAleenan, an auxiliary at Westminster and the Church's lead bishop for migrants and refugees, urged Catholics to remember and pray for those displaced by war, poverty and persecution.

Four **Dominicans** took perpetual vows in a ceremony in Dublin last weekend. The former lawyer, two doctors and a physicist are all preparing for priestly ordination.

Scotland's Catholic Church is urging the **Scottish Parliament** to reject proposed legislation allowing assisted suicide for terminally ill people. Anthony Horan, director of the Catholic Parliamentary Office in Scotland, described the proposals as "dangerous".

PHOTO: © MAZUR/CBCEW.ORG.UK



The monks of **Douai Abbey** have celebrated the blessing of Fr Paul Gunter OSB (pictured) as their new abbot. Abbot Paul received the abbatial blessing from Bishop Egan of Portsmouth earlier this month.

Archbishop of Birmingham Bernard Longley was to join Anglican Bishop of Coventry Christopher Cocksworth at an ecumenical choral service at **Coventry Cathedral** on 21 September, the UN's International Day of Peace.

A spokesman for the Association of Catholic Priests in Ireland has expressed "dismay and disbelief" over a discussion by **Cloyne Council** of Priests of the National Synodal Synthesis. There was "no appetite for listening, no willingness to learn", he said.

Six hundred individuals and families, including 800 children, struggling with the **cost of living** in Ireland, have sought help from Dublin-based Crosscare Food Poverty Service.

Bernadette leaves Liverpool

The relics of St Bernadette arrived at the Catholic and Anglican cathedrals of **Liverpool** last week. On Tuesday they began a journey to cathedrals in Salford, Lancaster and the Syro-Malabar Eparchy of Great Britain in Preston, before continuing on to Scotland's Carfin Grotto.

A new Catholic school was blessed on Wednesday last week by Bishop Alan Hopes of East Anglia. St John Henry Newman Catholic primary school and nursery, in Hampton Water, Peterborough, is the first new Catholic primary school to be built in the diocese for more than a decade.

Compiled by **Ruth Gledhill**.

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PERSON IN THE NEWS

The Revd Mia Hilborn, head of chaplaincy at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Trust, who led the team serving the miles-long queue to see the Queen's coffin: 'People beam when they see a chaplain.'

UNITED IN GRIEF AND GRATITUDE / World bids farewell to Queen Elizabeth II

Mourning culminates in Westminster Abbey funeral

PATRICK HUDSON

THE FUNERAL of Queen Elizabeth at Westminster Abbey on 19 September concluded a period of national mourning.

Among the 2,000 members of the congregation were representatives from different UK religions and of many Christian denominations, including senior Catholic bishops. Cardinal Vincent Nichols, the Archbishop of Westminster, the Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh, Leo Cushley, and the Archbishop of Cardiff, Mark O'Toole, were part of a procession of church leaders from each nation of the United Kingdom. The Catholic Archbishop of Armagh, Eamon Martin, attended as part of the delegation from Churches in Northern Ireland.

The congregation in Westminster Abbey was composed of heads of state from the Commonwealth and around the world, with Pope Francis represented by Archbishop Paul Gallagher, the Holy See's secretary for relations with states.

PHOTO: CNS/REUTERS, CHIP SOMODEVILLA



The coffin of Queen Elizabeth II draped in the Royal Standard

Other prominent Catholics taking part in the service included Baroness Scotland of Asthal KC, the secretary general of the Commonwealth, who delivered the first lesson, from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians.

The choir was under the direction of James O'Donnell, Westminster Abbey's organist and master of choristers, who was master of music at Westminster Cathedral until 2000. It sang Psalm 42, "Like as the hart desireth water-brooks", in a composition by Judith Weir, the master of the King's music. The Prime Minister, Liz Truss, read the second lesson from the account of the Last Supper in John's gospel. The choir sang an anthem specially composed by Sir James MacMillan, on a text from Paul's Letter to the Romans: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Romans 8:35).

Cardinal Nichols' prayer offered thanks for the Queen's commitment to the Commonwealth. At the committal in St George's Chapel, Windsor, the minister of Crathie Kirk, the chaplain of Windsor Great Park and the rector of Sandringham, Canon Paul Williams, said prayers over the coffin. Canon Williams read "O Lord, support us all the day long of this troublous life ..." by St John Henry Newman.

Plater Trust invites proposals from charities for small grants programme

THE CHARLES Plater Trust has opened its 2022 small grants programme, inviting charities with "an imaginative proposal for social action, lay leadership or applied research project with a specific community or group" to apply, *writes Patrick Hudson*.

Grants of up to £5,000 are available to small charities with an annual income of less than £100,000. This programme runs in parallel with the trust's scheme for larger projects. The one-year grants "can be used to fund responses to local need in parishes, deprived communities or with marginalised groups".

Philomena Cullen, the grants manager, said the trust was "blown away by the work the nine small charities we funded last year achieved with relatively modest amounts of money from us".

Recipients of last year's small grant awards included Catholics for Aids Prevention and Support, a pastoral ministry for those living with HIV, and the Vincentian Volunteers, which runs gap-year programmes for young people to work with charities while living in community.

Non-Catholic charities are also eligible, with grants going to StreetDoctors, which trains first responders in south London to provide life-saving aid to victims of knife crime, and to the East Berkshire Downs Syndrome Support Group to fund language therapy sessions. "There is an enormous amount of talent and determination at local levels that we want to continue to support and see flourish," said Cullen.

The Charles Plater Trust manages the endowment from the sale of the former Plater College in Oxford, which offered vocational courses to adult students until its closure in 2005. The trust works to maintain the legacy of Charles Plater SJ, the pioneer of the early-twentieth-century Catholic Social Movement, "in developing social justice through education".

The trust publishes its criteria for grant awards on its website, with an emphasis on the participation of beneficiaries in the design and delivery of projects.

CLIMATE CRISIS

Operation Noah report says CofE can do more to cut emissions

CHURCH-OWNED land contributes "significantly" to the climate crisis according to a new report from the ecumenical climate change charity Operation Noah, *write Ruth Gledhill and Ellen Teague*.

Operation Noah's new "Bright Now" report, *Church Land and the Climate Crisis*, finds that there is "considerable scope" for Churches, especially the Church of England, to reduce their emissions from landholdings.

It comes as the Catholic Church marks the Season of Creation, which began on



1 September and runs until 4 October, where many parishes and church leaders have undertaken practical action and advocacy on the climate crisis. The report's recommendations on ways to reduce and store carbon emissions focus on one of the country's largest landowners, the Church of England, which owns 0.5 per cent of the UK's land.

While the Church of England has adopted a 2030 net zero target, its landholdings are outside the scope of the target. The report finds agricultural land owned by the CofE is likely to create more greenhouse gas emissions than all CofE church buildings combined. It offers strategies for improvement to farmers of church-owned land.

Queen praised as a peacemaker in Ireland

THE LEADER of the Catholic Church in Ireland has said Queen Elizabeth II "modelled reconciliation" and took very courageous steps and risks for peace, *writes Sarah Mac Donald*.

In a statement issued ahead of attending the funeral of the monarch, Archbishop Eamon Martin said the Queen was "a courageous peacemaker and a reconciler of difference". The Primate of All Ireland told RTÉ Radio's *Morning Ireland* that many Catholics in Ireland saw "a woman of great service and faith in Queen Elizabeth".

In Northern Ireland, "huge numbers" of people had gone to Hillsborough to lay floral tributes and had attended the various services of commemoration, he explained. "People in the Catholic community tend to be very much nationalist and even republican in their political leanings. However, they did see in Queen Elizabeth a woman of great service," and a very strong woman of faith, he said. "She had no difficulty whatsoever expressing publicly her faith in Jesus Christ and yet at the same time had great respect for people of all faiths and traditions and people of no faith. She saw herself as a servant."

PHOTO: ALAMY/PA, LIAM McBURNEY



The Queen shakes hands with Martin McGuinness

Speaking about Queen Elizabeth's visits to Northern Ireland and her historic 2011 visit to the Republic, Archbishop Martin said it had endeared her to the Irish people and she had joined the ranks of those who took risks for peace. "She modelled and witnessed to reconciliation," he said, and recalled how on a visit in 2012 to Enniskillen she entered a Catholic church and "extended that hand of friendship".

Of the Queen's meeting with Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness in 2014, he said it came "at a very difficult time for her and for Martin McGuinness". She had taken steps to build bridges and she sought to redefine relationships while recognising a very deep and wounded past.

CENSUS / Figures from NI expected to show historic shift

Catholic majority in North for first time

MADOC CAIRNS

EXPERTS EXPECT the results of the 2021 census in Northern Ireland to show that Catholics outnumber Protestants in the territory for the first time, when they are published later this week. The announcement is likely to have far-reaching implications in Northern Ireland, which has been politically dominated by a Protestant-background majority since partition in 1921.

With Catholic-background voters tending to support Irish nationalist parties that promote reunification with the South, and Protestant-background voters supporting unionist parties opposing such moves, the census results will likely be taken as predictive of a broader political shift. Weakening church attendance and religious affiliation, especially among the young, means however that such an impact may be more muted than expected.

The last census, held in 2011, showed Northern Ireland's population to be split nearly equally between Protestants (at 48 per cent) and Catholics (at 45 per cent) while 7 per cent said they belonged to another religion or none. In 2001, the equivalent figures were 53 per cent Protestant and 44 per cent Catholic. Multiple factors are likely to affect the demographic shift, including a traditionally higher birth rate among Catholics and immigration from Catholic-majority nations like Poland. Many census respondents have also declined to state their religious affiliation, complicating assessments of the results.

A 2016 Labour Force Survey pointed to a clear age differential in demographics, with 51 per cent of school-age children in 2011 being Catholic as opposed to 37 per cent Protestant. Among residents of working age, 44 per cent were Catholic and 40 per cent Protestant. Only among the over-sixties was there a majority of Protestants – 57 per cent, compared to Catholics on 35 per cent.

Although Northern Ireland has undergone a process of secularisation, this has been slower than in Britain, with over 80 per cent of respondents identifying as Christian in the 2011 census. Moreover, a drift away from religion has been more pronounced in traditional Protestant areas, with Catholics more likely to maintain ties with the Church even if they cease to attend Mass regularly. The statistics from the 2021 census have been delayed due to the death of the Queen, but were to be released on Thursday 22 September.

The data being released this week will include information on ethnic group, national identity, language and religion.

Pro-life views 'excluded'

UP TO 2,000 people took part in the March for Life in Dublin on Saturday and called on the Irish government to address the abortion rate and do more to promote alternatives to abortion, *writes Sarah Mac Donald*.

Eilís Mulroy of Pro Life Campaign Ireland said the government had to stop keeping women in the dark about positive alternatives. "In the first three years since the new abortion law was introduced, 20,718 Irish abortions have taken place. This is a national tragedy that demands urgent action to ensure that women contemplating abortion are fully informed on alternatives," she said.

An independent review into abortion services is currently under way led by Dr Catherine Conlon, assistant professor of social studies at Trinity College Dublin, four years after the country's abortion laws were liberalised in the 2018 referendum on the Eighth Amendment. The review is due to be completed by the end of the year.

In her address to the rally, Carol Nolan TD said: "There is absolutely no excusing the way the government is excluding the pro-life movement from the review process. It is wholly unacceptable for the Minister for Health to repeatedly meet with pro-abortion groups for their views, while refusing to meet with any pro-life representatives."

IHS
JESUIT CHURCH OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
FARM STREET

Regular Mass & Service Times

Sunday 18:00 (Saturday Vigil)
08:00| 9.30 (Family)| 11:00 (Latin)| 12:30| 17:30
Weekdays: 08:00| 13:05| 18:00
Saturdays: 08:00| 18:00 (Saturday Vigil)
Bank Holidays: 13:05

All Masses are currently livestreamed on our website.

Opening hours

The church is open daily from 07:30 to 18:30.

Confessions

Monday to Friday: 12:00 -13:00
Saturday: 10:00 – 12:00

Also by request. Please phone to make an appointment.

Please phone 020-7493-7811 for more information

www.farmstreet.org.uk

PASTORAL REVIEW WEBINAR SERIES

WCCM MEDITATION & COMMUNITY

Leadership and Ministry

Good management and good ministry are inseparable. In order for churches to minister effectively they have to have excellent management. This is why the Pastoral Review has organised a series of special webinars. Those involved in church leadership – both clergy and laity – will have the opportunity to engage in themed sessions that focus on the relationship between leadership and ministry in our church settings.



Women's leadership for the future of a synodal church – led by Stephanie MacGillivray, Officer Promoting Women's Leadership Caritas Internationalis.Recording available*



Sustaining vision and inspiration for leadership in challenging times – led by Simon Uttley, Visiting Professor in Catholic Education within the Institute of Education St Mary's University. Recording available*



Pastoral Leadership: Guidance in the Spiritual Life – led by Fr Liam Finnerty OCD, a Carmelite priest who holds degrees in Theology and Social Work from Milltown Institute, Dublin and Glasgow University, respectively. Recording available*



Tuesday 27 September 2022 - Catholic Educational Leadership – led by Martin Johnson, Executive Headteacher at Sacred Heart RC Primary School & Teach Heart Alliance, seconded part-time to work at the Diocese of Salford Department for Education as CPDF lead.

Webinars will run from 18:00 – 19:00 BST
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THE TABLET

TABLET WEBINAR

The England and Wales synod process and "where we go from here?"



Christopher Lamb – The Tablet's Rome correspondent talks to **Austen Ivereigh**, papal biographer; **Fr Philip Inch**, Archdiocese of Liverpool synod 2020 moderator and **Avril Baigent**, who works at the Pastoral Ministry office in the Diocese of Northampton, about the synod process in England and Wales and the next steps on the journey towards becoming a more listening, inclusive and mission-focused Church

Wednesday 28 September 2022, 18:00 – 19:00 BST

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Webinar

60 years after the opening of the Second Vatican Council on the 11 October 1962



Join **Thomas O'Loughlin**, Professor of Historical Theology at the University of Nottingham; **Dr Alana Harris**, Director of Liberal Arts and Senior Lecturer in Modern British History, King's College London; and **Dr Patrica Kelly**, Honorary Senior Research Fellow, University of St Andrews, as they discuss the impact of Vatican II, one of the most important events in Christian history.

Tuesday 11 October 2022 – 6.00pm – 7.00pm BST
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Pastoral Review

THE TABLET SINCE 1840

PASTORAL REVIEW WEBINAR

What does servant leadership look like in the Church today?

join online



Join our distinguished panel, chaired by Jim McManus, a Chartered Psychologist, Chartered Scientist and Fellow of the British Psychological Society to talk about vocation and professionalism in clergy and laity and the links between the two. How do we form Christian adults for service?

Joining him for this webinar will be Dr. Clare Watkins, Reader in Ecclesiology and Practical Theology, University of Roehampton and Raymond Friel, Chief Executive of Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN).

Wednesday 19 October 2022, 19:00 – 20:00 BST

BOOK NOW

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Pastoral Review

The art of British queuing

ADRIAN CHILES

THE BRITISH are the best in the world at queueing and, albeit in the saddest of circumstances, we've now shown this to be true. The Queue – accorded a capital letter by many publications – was the longest, most efficient, most wholesome, most famous and most plain *good* line of people ever formed. Only the British could have pulled this off.

But hang on a minute. Who's this I hear speaking on the radio? Some psychologist clever clogs from University College London, that's who. One Adrian Furnham, who's made a study of queueing. Invited to confirm that we're world leaders in the field, this gentleman had the following to say:

"No, no. I think that's a myth we tell ourselves. I think we've been very polite as queuers, and we feel very strongly a sense of justice. I don't believe anybody likes queueing, nor do I believe there's any evidence that we're better at it than the Germans or the Swedes or whatever."

What? How dare he! Oh, come on man. We've had a difficult few weeks. Now of all times, please don't try to undermine us in this way. If I was king, I'd pack him off to the Tower forthwith.

I honestly didn't think there was a right-thinking person on the planet who'd dare to make such an assertion. There's only thing for it: competitive queueing must become a thing. There will be European and then World Championships and, in four Olympics' time, it will be an Olympic sport. We could be more ambitious and push for inclusion in Paris 2024, but that would involve jumping the long, er, queue of sports and pastimes applying for Olympic status.



There will be European and then World Championships and, in four Olympics' time, it will be an Olympic sport

I've given some thought to what competitive queueing would involve. As founding president of the International Competitive Queueing Federation, I have settled on a format. It will be largely a team event featuring a number of disciplines. There will be sprint and combat events. The sprint will feature 16 athletes – all on the same team – racing on a 100m track but, instead of a tape at the finish line, there will be a wall with a single door in it. The team which gets all 16 of its members through that door in the shortest time will take gold.

There will also be a slalom event for another team of 16 – my logic for 16, by the way, is that it would allow for two competitors per lane of a standard running track. This one too will be over 100m but, instead of a single door for a finish line, we'll have one of those snaky queueing systems you get at passport control, theme parks and so on. The team to get all its members through in the shortest time will take gold. However, there will be time penalties for any touching of the barriers, which will emit a loud DING if any competitor does so.

In these two disciplines I can see the Germans, Swedes and Swiss being contenders, but I'm confident Team GB will prevail. Plainly, without getting into crude national stereotypes, the French, Italians and Spanish will all struggle – they'll be like GB trying to compete at handball or something. However, striving for inclusivity here at the ICQF, there will be a third, individual, queueing event which may suit them more. This one will take place using the 100m track + door arrangement with 16 competitors of different nations. First one through the door, by fair means or foul, takes gold. It'll make for great viewing, although I can't see GB medalling here. Such selfish scrumming really isn't in our nature.

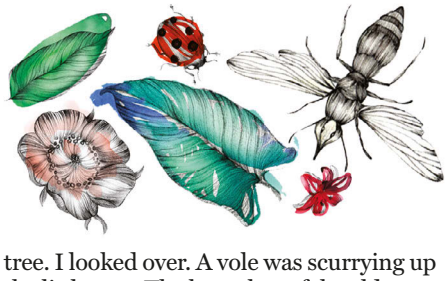
Adrian Chiles is a radio and TV presenter.

Glimpses of Eden

JONATHAN TULLOCH

THE PATH was well marked. Dutifully, I followed the signposts through the woods, along the pond and up the dale side. Then, somewhere in a large thicket of gorse, the waymarkers disappeared and so did the path. I tried one way, then the other, I doubled back, I ploughed directly ahead, but when I emerged from the undergrowth, I had no idea where the track lay. What else could I do than sit down and enjoy the autumn sun?

I hadn't been there long when the quick movements of a small animal caught my ear. It was coming from the nearby elder tree. I looked over. A vole was scurrying up the little tree. The branches of the elder were bowed and black with the heaviest crop of elderberries I've seen for years and, reaching this bonanza, the little mammal began to tuck in. A few minutes later, the rodent was joined by a blackbird. Then, just when I was thinking it was time to continue searching for the path, a hungry whitethroat arrived. Elderberries are eaten by lots of wildlife: foxes, rabbits, deer, dormice, badgers and numerous bird species, particularly migrants needing to fuel their journey to Africa. In fact, by accident I'd stumbled on the very thing that a lot of British wildlife spends autumn looking for – a ripe elderberry bush.



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